

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS

BY

MRS. WILL GORDON, F.R.G.S.
(WINIFRED GORDON)

AUTHOR OF "ROMANIA YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY"
"A WAYFARER'S WALLET"

"I am restless, I am athirst for far-away things"

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TO
W. G.

NEAR EASTERN PROVERBS.

SERBIAN.

He who spares the guilty wrongs the innocent.

If everyone tells you you are drunk, go to bed—even if you are perfectly sober.

Better a crust of dry bread than an empty sack.

Better an empty sack than the Devil within it.

He who burns his mouth with hot soup and does not warn his neighbour is not an honest man.

Savoir vaut mieux qu'avoir.

BULGARIAN.

One does not go to Hell to light a cigarette.

If an ass is angry he runs as fast as a horse.

God's feet are wool, His hands are iron.

The six days are good boys, Sunday is a sluggard.

The poorest devil is the Devil, because he has no hope.

Strangers forgive—parents forget.

ROUMANIAN.

Save some white coins for black days.

Better an egg to-day than an ox to-morrow.

The stream flows on, the stones remain.

When the head does not work the legs suffer.

FOREWORD.

BEFORE the war much of the current literature of the day was written for the "man in the street" and the "woman at home." But the stern realities of to-day have altered everything, and in their place now stand the "man at the front" and the "woman at work."

Old ideas, prejudices long cherished, are vanishing; new thoughts, emotions, are taking their place, and a larger outlook, an eager desire to extend the horizon of one's knowledge, to know something of the problems and aspirations of the countries involved in the war has arisen. Thoughts are astir and minds are turning to the Near East, where the first sign of the war cloud appeared and from whence perhaps the first signs of peace may arise.

Ill-health has prevented me from continuing any very active work, but it has brought me the solace and leisure to write of the interesting Balkan countries I know so well—the whirlpool since earliest times of shifting powers, intrigues and ambitions. Beautiful, fair lands, containing much that is interesting in their people and problems, much that is unfamiliar in their lives and customs, survivals of a medieval age. For, notwithstanding that the last thirty years has wrought marvels among these countries, bringing them out of a state of virtual subjection and misrule to the rank of modern powers, yet things change slowly in the East and the transition from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century is not accomplished at once.

FOREWORD.

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I hope in the following pages that I may have been able to awaken in my readers a sympathetic interest and a more complete understanding of these peoples, especially the gallant little nations of Serbia, Roumania, and Montenegro, who have fought so heroically on the side of the Allies, whose people are prostrated and famine stricken, but whose national soul and faith are still unvanquished.

WINIFRED GORDON.

London,
March, 1918.

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SERBIA.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

I.

BEOGRAD—THE WHITE CITY.

"THE Balkans—Albania! What queer wild places you go to!"

Such were the remarks of friends when we proposed spending the spring there. But many happy memories of distant lands—Korea, Mexico, Uganda; East Africa, with its wonderful big-game shooting over equatorial plains, the sudden fall of night which follows the setting sun, the snorts and soft blowings of startled wild animals, fearful of that mighty slayer, the lion; the anxious look-out for the lights of camp; Zanzibar; a purpled star-lit night on an Arab roof with the murmuring ocean below; the dry swish of palm-trees by the Blue Nile—had only deepened our love for the more primitive lands and the adventurous paths of the world.

"Discomforts!"

"Well—yes, perhaps there are some in the country districts, but that only adds to the interest, and we can always find comfort and baths and best clothes in the civilized capitals, for isn't Bucharest the 'Paris of the East.'"

So they saw us off with a tolerant smile.

We left London in a burst of spring warmth and sunshine in the last days of a cold, bleak March, which had rushed in like a lion, had roared steadily through its allotted span and was now giving place, shamefacedly and repentant, to gentle April, the month of tears and laughter. East of

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

Vienna, the wind-swept plains of Hungary were still arid and bare: it was only in the more sheltered stretches that we saw the soft flush of the willow which heralds the spring. Its forerunner, the rain, however had been there, and we passed great stretches of water, that looked as if they would engulf the trim little white homesteads, like so many Noah's arks with their red roofs and small square windows.

As we approached stately Buda-Pesth, our train crept sinuously by the banks of the Danube, which, swollen and majestic, was sweeping through the hills, which narrowed almost to a cañon here. The water, turbulent and tawny, gorged by the recent floods, was swirling along in great eddies and danger-smooth currents, that gleamed like the oily back of a whale. On a crest of the darkening hills a grey old castle stood out clear against the glowing sky, and the lingering shafts of the setting sun were turning the brown plains to rose colour and the muddy stream to gold as we steamed into the city.

The station was brilliantly lit by big arc lights, and was crowded with a polyglot crowd of Hungarian peasants and working-class people. It was market-day, and the busy traffic over the country folk were all returning by the evening train. A noisy chorus of farmyard voices came from a pile of crates near a luggage van: geese, ducks, poultry and pigs were all protesting against their incarceration, and a pig call tied to a lamp-post was vehemently howling its hunger and disapproval of the day's proceedings. A group of Magyar girls near us were having a gay time chaffing each other, and teasing two good-looking specimens of manhood, who seemed to hold their own very well, however, as they lazily smoked their long pipes and laughingly returned the sallies of their tormentors. The latter were finely-built creatures of medium height, with square shoulders and erect carriage—bright rosy complexions and dancing eyes, that had a lot of smouldering fire in them. They seemed, too, to have their full share of mother-wit and repartee, judging by the laughter that greeted some of their retorts.

"Eyes of neither grey nor blue
But of tawny velvet hue,
Bred with out-drawn tresses laden—
Is the real Magyar maiden."

Their costumes were delightful. Innumerable stiffy-

starched petticoats reached to their knees, of a gay chintz design, which gave them a vigorous swing when walking, that was not ungraceful, and their feet were thrust into high Hessian boots that met their many skirts. Some wore stiffly-starched little muslin caps fitting close to their heads, and held in place by gay pins, but others, the older, less coquettish ones, had swathed their heads and busts in multicoloured little shawls, for the wind was keen. Their babies, tightly done up like parcels, showed nothing but a little round face and bullet head covered with a knitted cap.

My husband, W. G., a born Bedouin, and happiest when perusing an atlas for fresh fields to roam in, or wooing sweet melodies from those amber-hued twin souls the Strad and the Montagnana, would have liked to renew old memories of the Hungarian capital, but I was anxious to push on eastwards, and woman-like, I got my way.

It was well after midnight before we passed Semlin, Austria's frontier town, and rumbled over the great iron bridge that spans the Save and so into Belgrade.

The only other passengers besides ourselves to alight were three musicians, 'cello, double-bass and violin, each with his cherished stock-in-trade. The station literally swarmed even at that late hour with spies and secret police, and my husband was promptly accosted by one of these gentlemen, in plain clothes, backed up by two very muscular looking soldiers. In voluble French a string of questions was launched at his head. Who was he? What were we doing there? Why did we come? How old were we? When were we leaving, etc., etc.

We were hauling our handbags out of the train, so were somewhat astounded at such an importunate catechism. Mildly, but in our best French, we endeavoured to dispose of such personalities to the best of our ability, W. G. evading the subject of our age with a gallantry and diplomacy worthy of all praise.

It reminded me so much of a like inquisition on my arrival in Quebec a few years ago, when four or five of us were summoned to the saloon. I was the first the Inspector pounced upon, and after surveying me severely he dictated to his clerk, "Height, five foot eleven"—a generous addition of four inches being given me! I then heard my

assumed weight and appearance lamely described, not too flattering, I may say, for I had had a miserable voyage and had conjugated all the moods and tenses of the verb "to sink," when for thirty-six hours in that terrible Golphtha—the Straits of Belle Isle—we had drifted in a dense fog with several icebergs waltzing around us; an experience which had certainly not brought the bloom to my cheek or the glint to my eye!

Having finished my description, he discharged a bold shot from his locker with a "How old are you?" It was so unexpected that I had rapped out a perfectly truthful answer almost before I was aware of it, but the cruel part of it was that I felt perfectly sure, from the smiles of those present, that I was not even allowed the credit of that courageous truth. If it is true, as someone says, that we should never trust a woman who will not quibble about her age after thirty, for she is inhuman, and there is no knowing what crimes she may commit, then I must have been a very dangerous person and quite unfitted to enter a much-protected country! The choicest question was, however, reserved for the end, and when I was asked as austere as before what were my blemishes, I need hardly say I retired in silent disgust, not unmixed with some humour, to the background to watch with amusement the discomfiture of the others.

Our interlocutors in Belgrade, though inquisitive enough, were neither so unscrupulous or severe in their demands as our cousins of Canada, and accompanying us to the waiting-room of the *domane* they were there joined by several other inquiring minds. We first produced our passports and then, with a delicate dignity, the large and carefully treasured document given us by the courteous Serbian Minister in London—one of Serbia's most able diplomats—which was an order to the Chief of Police to "laiser passer" our "noble selves" and baggage, and to do everything in his power possible for our comfort and convenience.

There was much congregating together and musing over this precious paper, which, to our dismay, did not work the instant miracle of transporting us to hotel and bed, as our tired senses hoped.

It turned out that the Chief of Police was in bed; and so suspicious are one and all of the official world here that,

even with our talisman before them, they would not let us leave, and a weary half-hour was spent in opening two of our boxes, which were thoroughly ransacked.

Tired and furious as we were, I could not help remembering with amusement the witty reply of a Canadian friend, who was crossing into the States. A bottle of whisky had been packed among her clothes by her maid. At the frontier she was asked if she had anything to declare, and quite forgetting about it she answered: "Oh, no! nothing but wearing apparel." The inquisitive clerk, however, started diving into her box, and very soon disgorged the tell-tale bottle. "Why," he drawled, "I thought you'd nothing but wearing apparel; what do you call this?"

Quick as lightning she retorted: "I don't know what you call it, but I call it a nightcap."

At last the socks, blouses and shoes which had overflowed were squeezed into our boxes again, the lids were jammed to, and we departed, thanking the gods, or rather the Serbian Minister, that we were not as the poor musicians whom we left behind, with all their intimate personal belongings disposed on the dirty floor for a minute inspection, while the precious instruments were even having their insides examined!—for there is much smuggling and Austrian intrigue carried on. I clambered into a ramshackle little open carriage, W. G. and some of the luggage into another, and we started off at a fearful pace, clattering and swaying up the steep hill in almost pitch darkness, into the sleeping town.

The little horses climbed like cats; the road was bad, full of ruts and holes that shot us up and down like monkeys on a stick; we turned, twisted and curled up the hill, and I anxiously looked ahead, lest I should lose sight of the carriage in front that held W. G., so sinister to my tired mind looked the slumbering city. But we surmounted the hill at last and rattled into the Rue Terazia. Another moment landed us at the door of the Grand Hotel, where a sleepy porter, warned by our telegram, was awaiting us, and we tumbled into bed about two.

We woke the next morning to the inspiring strains of music, and hearing the patter of many feet on the stone walk outside I hastily donned a dressing-gown and peered

through the muslin window curtains into the street below.

Some regiment was on the march, and the band playing delightfully was attracting—as usual—all the nondescripts of a town who love to follow the beat of a drum. The funny old jingle—

"An Austrian Army Awfully Arranged
Boldly By Battery Bombed Belgrade,"

leapt into my mind as I watched them pass and knew how often the apprehension of such a possibility comes into the minds of the rulers of Belgrade, for they have a very just estimate of the treacherous character of their neighbour Austria.

The soldiers were stepping out well, and were strong-looking well-built fellows—the officers were in extremely well-cut long brown coats which gave them the appearance of having very good figures, and I discreetly admired them from my position of muslin-hung observation.

Below us a man with a basket of crisp rolls of bread was threading his way in and out of the passers-by, doing a fine trade; long arms were thrust over intervening shoulders to pluck a specially desired roll, and the coins were dropped into a plate the vendor held in his other hand.

Opposite our windows was a sad-looking little café which the geyser had just swept out and the floor of which he was watering with a basin of water from which he most dexterously splashed with a twist of his hand a shower of bright drops. This was in preparation for the day's business, for the cafés are the clubs of Belgrade, and here politics and again politics, and a "lortle" business is discussed, and much card-playing indulged in, for the Serbian is, apparently, a man of leisurely habits with lots of time to kill. Hurry or bustle are words unknown to him, and even in walking his pace resembles the slow saunter of the Korean or the dignified step of the Arab with all eternity before him.

Just beyond the café we noticed a shop with its window draped funereally. In the centre a grey satin and lace-trimmed burying-gown for a woman was displayed. Above the window a large sign, "Installation de pompes funé-

bres," in big white letters on a black ground, swung slowly in the breeze back and forwards, as if beckoning to one. It struck a chill note on our gay morning mood; but breakfast and the healthy appetites we displayed over coffee and rolls soon dispelled what a Scotch paraphrase, learned in my youth, calls "the transient gloom."

There are no very good cafés or restaurants in Belgrade, and the best was at the Grand Hotel, where we stayed. We always used the smaller restaurant beyond the big bare hall, which with its iron tables and big buffet resembled a big station waiting-room. In the evening a band always played there, and people used to come in for coffee or wine and sit and smoke and discuss politics or gossip. Any number of men dined and lunched daily in the little restaurant we used, but we rarely saw any ladies with them. The food was not very good, and however early we sat down to table, the chicken was almost invariably all eaten up, and the meat being often tough, we had as invariably to fall back upon *omelette aux fines herbes* and *gemischtes salad*, and no one could accuse us on these occasions of not leading the simple life.

Some of the Serbian dishes looked nice, and we sampled a few, but we were wary. Some of the best were *Giuvetch*, stewed lamb with potatoes, rice, tomatoes and onions—very savoury; *Turka na podnosu*, turkey roast with cabbage; *gibanica*, a sort of cheese pie; and *Kisela chorba*, a very good soup made with meat and lemon-juice—it is best when made of chicken, and with good slices of the breast in it is very nourishing. We used to watch, with amusement, the men toasting each other at the little tables. There were so many toasts that they seemed to take up the best part of the meal. They would clink glasses and wish each other "*uzdravje*," or good health, take a nip of the *slivovitz* or wine, and then clink and wish again—this went on three times before it was considered that the health had been properly drunk.

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The Serbs call Belgrade Beograd, or "the white city," and really it deserves its name, for there is a general aspect of whiteness among the buildings that reminded me of some of the old Spanish towns, but with little or none of their dirt. On the contrary, the city looked clean and well-ordered, and

the people, sturdy and well-clothed, showed none of the squarer of the south, and resemble more closely the Swiss in their independence and plodding thrift.

Its position is very fine, and from the plain the city looks quite mediæval, clinging to the hill on which it stands. At its foot the Save joins the Danube, and like a great moat sweeps the base of the hill in a big semicircle. To the west stretches the land of the Serb, the horizon bounded by the long line of distant mountains where the dreaded but glorious Haiduk (brigands) of the past—the heroes of so many of the Balkan folk-songs—made their stronghold. The old fortress crowns the summit, and like a watch-tower looks eastward over the rich Hungarian plains watered by the Danube.

Our hotel stood in the principal street, the Rue Terazia, a fine broad boulevard with quite fair shops, which leads up to the historic old fortress with the Kalemegdan or public gardens around it. The grounds are passably laid out; an open-air restaurant and band-stand promised entertainment for one class, while for another we saw the familiar merry-go-rounds and shooting galleries of our own bank-holiday beachcombers. The fortress, with its lichen-covered bastions, crowns the hill and commands a magnificent view over miles of country stretched at one's feet; the Danube, which was in flood, looked like a great fjord studded with islands of every size and shape. It is a famous place from whence to watch the sun sinking over the great Hungarian plains, for the view is very extensive, and the atmospheric effects are sometimes very fine. It was on this very ground, when the standard of the Crescent floated over the city, that the Turks executed their prisoners and impaled them on the walls, as a warning to the conquered Serb.

The British Legation, too, has a wonderful outlook over the surrounding country. It is a long, rambling, old-fashioned house, and from the drawing-room, which stretched the whole length of the building, one looked to the plains and far horizon. We spent some pleasant hours here, and I was never tired of watching the busy street-life passing below, or the beautiful stretch of river, plain and cloud beyond.

The town has been almost rebuilt in recent years, and much of the picturesque Turkish or distinctly Serbian type

of house has given way to the style of Vienna or Pesth. The streets are laid out in straight angles crossing each other, many leading out into the country, and the roadways are neatly paved with stone. Electric tramcars dash past the creaking country carts, with their slow-moving oxen: trees are planted in most of the streets, which must give welcome shade in the hot summers.

Most of the shops are held by Germans, for the Serb is an agriculturist and rather despises shopkeeping. The wares they sell are hideous modern gauds—cheap and nasty—all having "Made in Germany" or "Made in Austria" on them. The Germans are nearly as much hated as the Austrians, and are always called "Swobs." The same word is used in Austria, where it is a term of opprobrium and contempt.

There were very few curios to be seen. Down near the market-place, with its charming background of old trees, we saw rough peasant fur coats and brightly embroidered ones for the women—velvet bodices stitched in gold, gay handkerchiefs and aprons in the little open booths.

Close by on the sidewalk there was a great display of hats for sale, which reminded me very much of the hat vendors in Seoul, the capital of Korea—which with Mexico are the two cities in the world, I should say, where the cult of the hat (for men only, be it noted) is carried to its extreme and most extravagant limit.

In Seoul they are piled up in great pyramids or built into solid stacks which block up the street, or are laid row upon row on the dusty highway to tempt the vain or necessitous one; while within the little mud-built shops they are so closely packed, that to peep within is like looking into the depths of some deep, dark cavern! For they are of the one unvarying hue of black, made of horsehair, felt or straw, and of fine spreading shape.

In Mexico the "caballero's" hat also covers a large part of the market square, as well as the master's person when worn! It has a conical crown and immense brim, curled at the edge, and measuring often nearly a yard across. They are hung up on the outside walls of the shop, laid on the footpath, or, like huge, upturned mushrooms, cover a big corner of the market-place.

The hats we saw here in Belgrade were the black astrachan.

than caps called Kalpak, and were arranged on a three-tier stand, such as one seen in a suburban conservatory for standing the plants on. They stood outside the house door on the sidewalk, and on them were rows of wooden stands shaped like a cone, on to which the tall, pointed caps were fitted. These are the kind the peasants wear. They looked as funny, just like a target of queer weapons that one wanted to knock down, or ammunition chests.

Next door was a little wine shop, and outside it sat two heavy-headed, long-bearded veterans, who had probably taken part in many a bloody battle in the far-off days of their youth. They looked a smiling, placid, cheerful old couple, sitting there on a rough bench, propped up against a gigantic barrel of the sour Serbian wine that tastes like vinegar. They were drinking a glass of *slivovitz*, and as we turned away I smiled at them, and they raised their glasses with a courteous gesture, bidding me *Do vidjenja*—good-bye.

II.

LIFE IN THE CAPITAL.

LA PRIMAVERA had arrived! and a glorious morning showed her dancing and tumultuously astir! Laughing with riotous mirth at the sheer joy of life and youth—at the fun and beauty of everything. Even the two gnarled old prune-trees standing together in the corner of the market square had joined in the frolic, and had burst into an orgy of pale blossom, which their staid, respectable, brown stems seemed almost to apologize for. The little blossoms themselves were just wild with excitement, dipping and dancing in the breeze, whispering and chattering to each other as the more venturesome ones swayed and fluttered and soared, but were caught at last by the eager hands of the boys and girls who laughingly gathered them to deck their braids or thrust them into their girdles.

Every kind of two and four legged animal seemed to congregate round these two old trees, for they stood in the very heart of the city of Belgrade, and women, old and young, stood in groups with their vegetables and eggs, all with their heads in kerchiefs, gay or sombre according to their age, and their bright-embroidered aprons; some in thick sheepskin coats, worn fur inside, showing they had walked far and started early, when the morn was cold. Their menkind were lazily busy with their beasts, for the Serbs are a slow and deliberate people. Draught oxen with big branching horns, sheep with long tails like a three-seasons-old fur boa, goats with bright inquisitive eyes and an inquiring mind as to the taste of one's suede hand-bag—a truly cannibalistic trait—and everywhere rampant, squeaking, grunting, snorting pigs!

Piggie is quite one of the family here, and the old nursery rhyme of the pig who stayed at home is absurd, for *every*

pig goes to market, from the mothers of many long-forgotten families to the latest and youngest piglets, who have often to be carried, so tender is their youth. They dominate the market, and are full of a queer pranky character, like naughty gutter-snipes. They run about squeaking and shrilling like little terriers, biting each other's hams if they get a chance, but extremely tame with the people. Some, tired out, had crumpled together in a bit of muddy ground like a nest of kittens, the mud on their bristly yellow skins caking in the sun and dry wind. Each party knew his own master quite well, and followed him at the sound of his voice and a curious clink-clink sound he made; the added blandishment of a few grains of corn, or a bean or two, being most useful in starting the family on the desired road home.

There were several food vendors: a man with a gaudily-painted, square box on wheels, which contained a warm, brown drink—the hot-sausage man with his rather evil-looking wares in a tin drum—the cake and bun man with his tray, which, when he had settled on a satisfactory "pitch," he placed on a tripod carried under his arm. Another purveyor of gastronomic pleasures wore a large drum-shaped thing slung round his neck and resting on his stomach: a whiff of savoury stew reached us as we passed him, and he was adorned like an Indian brave with knives and forks, for the peaceable performance of his customers.

Great, slow-footed omen with branching horns moved slowly along, drawing the long, creaking, wooden carts, some of which had wheels like the old Roman chariots, and led by the equally slow-footed Serb, a fine-looking fellow in his picturesque white and brown garb and the high-crowned cap.

And the *Tziganin*! wild, untamed-looking creatures, hanging about the market-place in their picturesque rags, ready to do any odd job: hold a horse, tinker a pot, tell a fortune, play a measure for the Kola dancers, or beg a coin with all the witchery, craft and subtlety that an endless ancestry of beggars had taught them.

One of them, a half-witted gypsy girl of fifteen or so, whined at our heels. Her sombre, swarthy complexion glowed like the colour of an old violin, the full lips hung loosely over the firm white teeth and smiled at us as we turned, but the eyes were vacant, hopeless. The slender

brown hands stopped twitching at her rags and the eye woke to cunning as she watched like an animal the movement of our hands to our purses. Someone had twisted a gaudy orange scarf barred with purple through the unkempt masses of her hair. She wasn't uncomely, indeed, but for the lustreless eye and the loose clasp of her lips, would have been handsome—dull-witted, helpless, yet with all the instincts of her untamed race within her. What could be her future?—a bit of waste tossed aside from the giant loom of life!

An elder girl, extraordinarily handsome, with the typical brown and pomegranate face of the young gypsy, blue-black hair and smouldering eyes, with the shaft of green flame in them that so quickly leaps to fire under passion, bare feet, and deep bosom at which the baby on her hip was tugging, was watching some of their men load up the carts. In one of them sat a very old crone—a picture of grim fate—her straggling white hair framing a face like a piece of brown *crêpe*, so seamed was it with wrinkles.

• • • • •
Past the gay, noisy market square the road stretched out into the country, busy to-day with the peasant market traffic. The hedges were the loveliest of young spring green, the dusty road was bright with life and colour, and the little white clouds were racing each other across the blue dome overhead.

A few miles out lies the Topchider Park, one of the country residences of the King, and we had to drive with caution to avoid catastrophes among the many happy families of pigs, poultry, oxen, calves and children that meandered at random along the road.

It was astonishing to find the railway line that carries the great Orient express to Constantinople laid on the same road on which we were driving! It looked for all the world like our suburban tramlines at home, only on a larger scale. No fence or hedge of any kind divides it from the pedestrians, and one wondered if there were not many terrible accidents, and how many poor pigs on their way to market it killed annually.

Groups of sedate-looking convicts were at work on the road, and stopped their labours to discuss us as we passed. Here and there a guard was to be seen, but we were told

they were a peaceable lot, and rarely tried to escape or make a row. They certainly looked it!

The park is very pretty and extends in wooded grounds for several miles. The trees were already showing a mantle of spring green and blossom, while little hardy flowers were thrusting their tiny heads above the ground. Charming walks and many streams abounded, and we passed a group of chattering gypsies going through the woods. I tried to snap-shot one of them as they passed—such a handsome bare-legged girl of sixteen, but she laughingly dodged the camera.

The upper classes in Belgrade patronize the park very much in summer, and entertain largely at the excellent restaurant established near the band-stand. The Palace, or, rather, it should be called the *Hunting Lodge*—for it is very small and unpretentious—was built by Mladen, the founder of the Obrenovitch dynasty, and here King Milan used to hold high revelry with those that were more jolly than good. It is said that Queen Nathalie—who was very jealous of her fickle husband's adventures—was told by a fortune-teller in her youth to beware of woods, as they would bring her harm. The King took advantage of this in selecting Topchider to lead his gay "*vie de Bohème*."

It stands in gardens not far from the road, with charming glimpses of the woods around. The country here reminded me very much of our English scenery. Hedges similar to ours were already in leaf, and the birds (which one so seldom hears on the Continent) were rejoicing in the sanctuary of the royal woods, and were pouring out their little hearts in melody.

Opposite the windows of the house stood a magnificent old oak-tree, its great branches forming a wonderful canopy overhead. Close to the Lodge is the monument erected to the memory of Michael Obrenovitch III., one of Serbia's wisest rulers, who, while walking here one day with his cousin, was assassinated.

From the rise of ground on which Topchider stands one has a good view of the surrounding country. Westwards, Belgrade on its hill stood out white and smiling. In the plain one saw the slow-moving great white oxen, drawing the creaking carts with their solid wooden wheels, just like those of the early Romans. Simple, but comfortable farms

were dotted here and there: brown-roofed barns and orchards of plum-trees—the fruit of which makes their national drink, “slivovitz” or plum brandy. A little later they will be white with blossom, and the fields will be starred with poppies, daisies, purple vetch and the blue cornflower: the hedges white with honeysuckle and hawthorn, and trails of wild clematis and bramble.

Even in England one does not see more blossoming roadsides than in this distant Serbian land, which was out in its brightest spring dress of colour and blossom when we passed through it later, on our homeward way.

And English birds were here, too, martins and swallows—the cuckoo and magpies chattering in the fields down by the stream, while up among the rocky ridges of the lonely hills one sees many eagles. War, however, has driven these kingly birds to remoter heights.

But the swarthy bands of gypsies—from whose tents you hear the plaintive melancholy of an old Serbian hero song, drawn from the strings of a violin or gusla—the placid storks with their nests on timber heaps or deserted out-houses, and the peasants’ varied costumes, strike the note of a strange and eastern country.

The bright morning had clouded over, the sky had banked up grey and threatening, and a few drops of rain were beginning to fall. We retreated to a little “cabaret” that had an awning over the door, and stood in its shelter for a minute. The Padrone promptly came out, we greeted each other with “Dobardan” (good-day) and though we could understand very little of what he said, we grasped from his polite manner and the inviting wave of his hand and many smiles, that he wished us to enter. Inside it was a little dark after the brighter light outside, but the place was quite clean. The distempered wall with the cheap print of King Peter hanging on it, the brown boarded floors, the rough wooden benches and tables, at which a few men in their homespuns were sitting drinking little glasses of “slivovitz,” or “rakia,” and the rows of bright little coffee-pots, made a homely impression. The fireplace seemed to be a hole built in the wall about twenty-eight inches from the ground, and the good wife was busy cooking several dishes on it. Our host was anxious we should drink one of the little glasses of plum brandy, but we laughingly shook our heads,

for it is a hot, strong nip. He chattered away to us, and not a word could we understand, but we smiled and smiled and nodded our heads graciously. He beamed all over when I caught the words "Engleska Gospodja?" (English lady) and I answered "Vieste," and I feel sure that he told all his friends that he had had a long talk with the English lady! Quite true, only he had done all the talking!

The road back to the town is the only good one in Belgrade, and, to our thinking, it wasn't even that! The streets and roads are generally fine and broad but badly paved, and ruinous on delicate carriage-work, not to mention one's own framework, and joints want to be well padded and oiled not to ache sometimes. An old Spanish proverb very aptly describes them—"God made the country, but the devil made the roads!" A curious and very interesting fact, however, about this road is that it is a very ancient one, existing before Christ, and ran from Constantinople through Sofia to Belgrade and so on westward.

A great many of the shops in Belgrade are held by Jews, rapacious fellows, who import most of their wares from Austria—articles which seemed of very inferior quality. I have never seen such numbers of money changers in any other city, every third or fourth shop was an establishment for the barter of coin, and one of them succeeded in very successfully "doing" on once a small gold Serbian coin, equivalent to about ten francs, but which was pretty, and we wished to have.

In the old days of the Turkish occupation, parish dogs used to roam the streets as scavengers, but advancing civilization, with its consequent order and cleanliness, has succeeded in gradually exterminating them by starvation, and the imposition, recently, of a dog tax, and the necessity of every animal having an owner and wearing a registered number, has brought harmony and peace into the streets at night, for the noise they used to make was atrocious.

One of the curious things we noticed here was the presence of numbers of frogs, which croaked, leaping and croaking, into the streets at sundown. They apparently disappeared into drains and gutters during the day, but held high carnival at night, and at the station the night we left, they were to

be seen in numbers on the platform, cheerfully hopping even under the very trains, and we walked carefully in the faintly lighted darkness to avoid stepping on to the horrid soft things. It is strange that they should exist here, for Belgrade stands on a hill high and dry.

The Serbian Minister in London had given us an introduction to the Prime Minister, and one morning about 11.30 Madame Pashitch, his wife, called upon us. We found her very charming and handsome. She is a Dalmatian and does not speak much English, but we conversed gaily in French, and she was most anxious to show us everything there was to be seen in Belgrade, and very amiably arranged to drive us that afternoon to see a cigarette factory.

The cigarette factory employs hardly any but women and girls, and there were about three hundred of them working when we went over it.

Tobacco is a State monopoly—a Special Commission fixing the tariff upon which it should be purchased. It is of very good quality and is grown in several districts. Vranja, Nisch and d'Uzice contribute a large portion, and Turkish tobacco is also grown with success. It is a very profitable industry and the exports are yearly increasing.

The long hours, terribly over-heated atmosphere and small pay had given most of the girls a worn, faded look, but we noticed several pretty types with soft dark eyes and thick black hair.

The men in Serbia are handsomer than the women, and are, as a rule, fine, well-built, muscular fellows. Their dress is of coarse brown or cream homespun, with good bold patterns in black stitched on them. The putties they wear on their long legs are often rags, but they are undoubtedly warm, and the shaped trousers thrust into them give them symmetry. High Russian caps of fur cover their heads. The women wear handsome embroidered aprons, gay kerchiefs on their heads, and a short coat of tan skin, the fur worn inside. The wives of the richer ones and wealthy shopkeepers wear on high days coats of velvet to their knees, trimmed round the edge, collar and wrists with fur, while on their heads the loveliest little scarlet fez is often worn. The crown is almost entirely covered with a beautiful design of seed pearls and gold, while the hair, either coiled or plaited, is rolled round the edge of the cap.

It is a most becoming adornment, and I longed to buy one, but as they are mostly heirlooms and no longer made, they are difficult to obtain. The only one I saw was too extortionate in price for me to succumb to, for the Jew rogue asked £14 for it.

On our way home we stopped at the Palace, the New Konak, which by arrangement we were to see. It is an entirely modern edifice built to the left of the Old Konak, and the courtyard and entrance-way stand where the ill-fated old palace stood, and the murder of King Alexander and his Queen took place. One side, that containing the hall-room and dining-room, looks right on to the street with neither garden nor protecting railings.

King Peter, who was in bad health, was not able to grant an audience, and his daughter, Princess Hélène, whom I had already met in Rome, was staying with her aunt, the Queen of Italy.

We were met at the entrance by numerous men-servants in dark blue and gold liveries, and going through a big square hall, were conducted to the horse-shoe staircase, carpeted with red, which leads up to the King's private apartments and council chamber. A fountain in the midst of fresh palms splashed softly in the alcove of the staircase, and a good bust of King Peter stood amongst the cool greenery.

We passed through a fine spacious apartment, throne room, council chamber, hall-room, what you will, for it lends itself to all those functions equally well: gorgeous in pink lacquer and gold, the canopy and throne facing the door looked very magnificent, though history relates neither a comfortable or secure seat! Out of this one enters the dining-room, solemnly decorated in subdued tones. The small round table in the centre was laid for dinner, very simply—covers, as the *Court Journal* gave it, being laid for four—no flowers or centre-piece, and the only ornaments were little stands holding fresh toothpicks for each one—the King's being tipped with red—not a well-chosen colour, we thought! The Palace is not large, but the rooms are handsome. Provision has not been made for enough of them, however, and Princess Hélène's rooms above are restricted to two—her bedroom and boudoir, one leading out of the other.

She is the only daughter of King Peter, and rumour had designated her as a bride for the Duke d'Abruzzi. Her mother, the Princess Zorka, eldest daughter of King Nicholas of Montenegro, died when she was a child, and her aunt, Queen Elena of Italy, after whom she is named, has always taken the greatest interest in the motherless girl. Owing to the fact that there was neither a Queen nor Crown Princess at the Serbian Court, Princess Hélène had to do the honours of the Palace, and though quite young she fulfilled them charmingly, and was liked by all. Her greatest happiness, however, was to spend the winters with her aunt, Queen Elena, in Rome.

She has a gentle, attractive, though rather shy personality, a charming manner and smile : of medium height, she is pretty, with the same dark eyes and masses of wavy hair that her aunts, the handsome daughters of King Nicholas, all possess, but she has not their distinction or beauty. She was a devoted sister to her two brothers, Prince George, the elder, who resigned his rights of accession, and Prince Alexander, now Crown Prince.

Queen Elena was very anxious that her niece should marry well, and so help to establish and bring advantage to the Karageorgevitch dynasty, so recently elected to the throne. Queen Elena was helped much in this matter by that able politician and patriot M. Pashitch, Prime Minister of Serbia, who suggested that if an alliance could be made with a member of the Russian Imperial family, it would be of inestimable advantage and help to the country and dynasty.

Coincidence helped fate and the Queen on this occasion, for Prince John, the eldest son of the Grand Duke Constantine, was passing through Rome then on the way to visit his aunt, Queen Olga, in Greece. Of course he met Princess Hélène, who was staying with the Queen : he fell in love with her, and much to the happiness of all concerned, the marriage took place at Peterhof in the presence of the Tzar and the whole Imperial family.

Beyond the Palace is the old Skupshtina or House of Parliament, an unpretentious, bungalow-looking building, no longer used now that the fine new Skupshtina has been completed and inaugurated. The members, who number 130, are mostly drawn from the professional and agri-

cultural classes, for there is no real aristocracy properly speaking.

The wealthier farmers send their sons to the University, and they in turn become engineers, lawyers, government officials and politicians, forming the Serbian upper class. Many of them have intermarried with their Serb kinsfolk in Dalmatia and Bosnia.

Serbia is very democratic, and the members attend in what dress they please. Many of them are peasants and come in their homely garb, which seems very incongruous beside the smart frock coat and good linen worn by the members of the Cabinet, and a few others. While in session they receive 15 francs a day and their travelling expenses. The Ministers receive about 12,000 francs a year, while the Prime Minister gets 18,000 francs (4720), which is not what we would call a generous salary; but living is cheap here, and the mode of life is simple and unostentatious; houses are low in price and little entertaining is done, except in the Legation or Cabinet set. The shops offer small opportunity to spend; there is little horse-racing, no opera, and a small theatre has only lately been subventioned by the State.

The Prime Minister, M. Nicolas Pashitch, a very vigorous personality in Serbian politics, is a remarkable statesman and a great patriot. Originally an engineer, he soon left this profession for the wider arena of political life, and became in turn President of the Chamber, Prime Minister and Serbian Minister at Petrograd. Various startling vicissitudes have marked his political career: he has been sentenced to death and also to a term of fifteen years' imprisonment for his radical doctrines, but was pardoned on both occasions. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Sava Grouitch Ministry in 1904, and two years later he formed his own Radical Ministry. He has guided his country so wisely through many a crisis that he has earned for himself the title of "The Grand Old Man" of Serbia. He is far and away the leading political force in Serbia, has always striven for Balkan union, and was one of the founders of the Balkan League. It was due to his shrewd foresight that an arrangement was made with Greece after the Turkish war which secured for Serbia a base for her exports from the port of Salonika.

In character, he is distinguished by his loyalty, straightforwardness and moderation, and puts patriotism before party. Early in 1915 he formed a Coalition Ministry amalgamating all parties.

In appearance, he is a tall, dignified man, looking young for his sixty odd years, notwithstanding the long beard he wears, which is generally considered to add a look of age to a man.

His smile is pleasant: the expression in his eyes very friendly and winning, and his manner is genial.

We had arranged to take tea with him and Madame Pashitch one afternoon, and as the dinner hour in Serbian social circles is generally very early to Western ideas—being about six o'clock—we were invited for 3.30.

The house, though small, is charming; the hall and divan being distinctly Serbian in character—good pieces of embroidery hung on the walls, and several fine examples of the *Pirot* rugs, for which Serbia is famous, were on the floor and divans. They are so charming, that it surprises me that one sees so few of them elsewhere, and that they are not more exported, for they are fine in design and colour, and not expensive. They are made mostly by women, who work a long day at their frames for the insignificant sum of one franc!

Among the guests invited to meet us were Monsieur Milenko Vesnich—an able Minister of Justice and Minister to France at the present time. He is a charming and cultured man, married to an American wife whom he had left in Paris during his short visit home. Mr. Alexander Yovitchitch, who as Serbian Minister to England resided for so many years in London, was there too with his English wife and two daughters. They were mournfully regretting the cosmopolitan joys of London, which they had grown to consider their home.

Shortly after our arrival large trays were handed round, on which were dishes of preserves flanked by a circle of tumblers of water and some teaspoons. W. G. watched with a twinkling eye my behaviour as the tray approached me. I confess I was a little puzzled what to do. Was the spoon for the jam or for the water? Which was I to attack first, or should I mix them? And where should I put my spoon, for there were no plates? I was quite ready to

refuse and watch what the others did, but prompted by our hostess, I took a spoonful of one of the preserves, a sip of the water, deposited my spoon in the tumbler, and the tray passed on to the next!

The preserve, which is called *slatko*, is made of cherries and spiced: it was delicious, and I much regretted the quick passing of that tray, and the modest spoonful I had taken. But this was only a prelude, and another tray promptly appeared with tall silver mugs of Russian tea, and an attendant salver of delicious sweet cakes. It is a pretty little ceremony this "Uzina," as they call it here, and corresponds to "le 5 o'clock" adopted by the Parisians from their Albion neighbours with their "dish of tea."

A distinctly Serbian custom, and one which is their principal fête, is the celebration, once a year, of the patron saint of a family. The ceremony is called *Kri na Ivo* (baptismal name) or *Slava* (glory of celebration). It is of ancient origin, dating far back to the ninth century, when the Serbians were baptized into the Christian faith, and every good Serb, abroad or at home, carries out this ancient religious rite with whole-hearted patriotic feelings. In every home the picture of the saint hangs in a prominent position, with a little lamp below it, and in some houses a bunch of flowers. It is celebrated with much gaiety and cheer, and all day long friends and relations come to the house to wish health and happiness and the continued blessings of the saint, greeting the host and hostess with "May God help you"—to which they reply "May God help thee." Singing, music, games and much hospitable refreshment carry the day well into the next.

Outside the diplomatic circle (who lunched and dined us hospitably) there is little real entertaining done. The wives of the Serbian officials are practical, stay-at-home people, interested in the smooth running of their house.

The Serbians show great friendliness and a keen disposition to adopt English ideas and tastes, and there is a decided sprinkling of the Anglo-Saxon element among the leading Serbian families, for several have married English or American wives, or those of their own country who have been brought up on the Continent under English governesses: good linguists, their free, broad-minded influence has had markedly good effects on the younger generation.

The lack of great wealth amongst the *haute société* has made the women capable in all domestic affairs, for the working classes in Serbia are too democratic and independent to care for service, and servants are a real difficulty to the Serbian housekeeper, and have to be imported from Germany, Hungary and Austria. The exorbitant prices charged for hats and gowns has also forced the young Serbian lady to cultivate all her latent talent in stitchery, and the success of her gowns is often due to her own clever fingers. They are not religious, and attend the services in their church with formality, while the priests have little influence over them.

The religion is the Greek Orthodox Church, and the priests are called *svechtenik* or *pop*. They are allowed to marry, and indeed a *pop* that is unmarried finds a difficulty in getting a parish. They are mostly drawn from the well-to-do farmer class. They deny the supremacy of the Pope and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The service is conducted in the old Slavonic tongue. No images are allowed, but ikons to be reverently kissed are placed in prominent positions.

In the churches one hears the fine old Byzantine church music, learnt centuries ago in the Greek monastery at Athos, where the early Serbian priests received their training. Time has changed but little these old chants, with their surging melancholy alternating with a more triumphant strain and sung unaccompanied by the male voices of a deeply patriotic people.

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The social circle in Belgrade is a small one, almost entirely confined to the diplomatic and political world, and when King Milan married the beautiful Nathalie, she may be said to have inaugurated that little world of society that met so charmingly and often during the brief eleven years that she reigned in Serbia.

After her departure, though her loss was greatly felt, the ball kept rolling under the leadership of such charming women as Madame Gyorgyevich, wife of the then Prime Minister, Madame Mileva Constantinovich, an accomplished and beautiful woman, whose daughter married Prince Mirko of Montenegro, Madame Perka Bojhichevich, a cousin of King Milan's, and the wives of the Ministers of

the different Legations, until the marriage of Draga Maschin to King Alexander came like a thunderclap on the unsuspecting city. The political intrigues, animosities and unrest that followed, and the final terrible tragedy scattered the gay little coterie, and gloom descended on the town. Only recently has it begun to foregather again, and open its doors with any show of confidence and hospitality.

Until lately, woman has played a subordinate rôle in Serbia, due perhaps to a remote Turkish influence, but more especially to the fact that for long ages the men have had all their energies directed to the occupation of war, repelling invaders and quelling disturbances at home. Now, with more settled conditions prevailing, she is gradually asserting herself, and taking her place in forming the social and charitable conditions of life which are a woman's prerogative, and so vitally necessary to a country that is progressing as Serbia is doing.

With regard to music, literature and art, Serbia is advancing slowly. But in sculpture she has achieved a distinct European reputation through the remarkable works of genius of her sculptor Jean Mesnadir, the son of a shepherd.

His work came very prominently before the world at the International Exhibition in Rome in 1911, when his phenomenal ability and bold undertakings of the national tragedies and agonies, showed a genius whose advent excited unusual interest, not unmixed with controversy. Later in London, his works aroused an even greater interest and attention.

The master idea that dominates his art is that of the death and resurrection of the Serbian race, and the inspiration has been gleaned direct from the tragedies of her history, the wonderful heroic folk-lore of her people, and the stark wildness of a long down-trodden country.

His sculpture unfolds before one the chapters of the past. The tragic massive figures of the desolate wives and mothers, mourning the fatal issue of the Battle of Kossova (which annihilated the nation for five centuries), the colossal statues of the nation's heroes; "The Blind Gipsy Player," "The Slave," all are instinct with the suppressed fury of an oppressed land, and the burning spirit of an unquenchable freedom.

As James Bone has written :

" In these sculptures Mestrovic delivers his testaments ; it has the demonic urgency of archaic art and of the entranced singleness of the Italian primitives. There is nothing between you and what he has to say ; his message is delivered with the immediacy of Fra Angelico. The inspiration he found in the folk song of his country was intensified by the conditions of his life in Dalmatia, almost within hearing of the horrors of Turkish rapine and massacre. Where (until last year in Belgium) but in the Balkans did Europeans know the look on the face of the tortured dead, and how young widows, fugitive from a ravaged land, sat in sorrow ? In all its phrases his art is religious art, its worship of freedom, its expression of the Christian legends are founded on emotional experiences that come from reality. . . . Its beauty comes like the beauty of flames, which is fire itself.

" His conceptions are deeply rooted in the life he knows. In his noble caryatides he has given an eternal formula to the grave enduring Serbian women of the country ; his heroes seem memories of the tall Serbian shepherds that haunted over in his youth ; his widows are mothers of Serbia.

" In ordinary times the art of Mestrovic might be too alien to England with our tradition of decorum and comfort, but in these times of stress the mood has been impelled upon us through which we can see and feel the message of his terrible images and the deep pitifulness, too, that lies within them. His heroic art, indeed, is almost the only art that does not seem alien to these mighty days."

III.

A PEASANT LAND.

TO many, the Balkan States, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, Albania, Bulgaria, and the beautiful Latin land of Roumania, are little more than a geographical expression, some far-off place with names that are almost an acrobatic feat to pronounce, and that sound something betwixt a snort and a moan.

But to those who know these lands they are of the deepest interest. Their great mountains, lonely grazing hills, deep forests, swamps and plains of wheat; their people, hardy peasants whose minds are saturated in song and story with the deeds of their great heroes of the past, and the fierce resentment born of long subjection to the cruelty of the Turk, that makes them answer the clarion call of war like lion cubs, and fight against overwhelming odds with a wonderful bravery.

It is in the country and among the peasantry and middle class that one really sees their true national life and customs. In Serbia the family system and style of living is quite patriarchal and communal. The father and mother are truly the heads of the family or community, and guide and direct the many members who form the "zadruga." As the sons grow up and marry, they bring their wives home; a wing or addition is built to the homestead for them, till sometimes thirty or forty members of one family may be collected in the "zadruga," or fenced-in home colony, as it is called, and the extraordinary thing is, that there is very little quarrelling in this extensive circle. That miserable gibe of the mother-in-law which is such a time-worn joke in the more modern western world, has no meaning here, though the power the mother wields over the communal home is great.

All the sons are equal, and the women understand that it is more important to farm or till the land for the general benefit, sharing alike in the well-being, than to launch out into separate enterprises of their own—for servants or farm labourers are unknown here. The Serb is too independent to work for anybody but himself or his "zadruga," and any help that may be required has to be imported from Hungary.

Serbia, which has been called both the "Garden of the Balkans" and "A Poor Man's Paradise," amply justifies its title, for one rarely sees the poor or the beggar, and though there may be smells, there are no slums and no unemployed. The soil is so rich that a very small holding will yield sufficient to keep a family. As in England, nearly every cottage has its garden, where vegetables, etc., are grown. Land is cheap—forty to fifty francs will purchase a fair-sized plot of ground, and the season yields as a rule double crops of hay and wheat, while pig-breeding is most profitable.

Every peasant, on coming to man's estate, can claim five acres from the Government. This is his birthright from the nation, and neither it nor its yield can be levied for taxation or debt. The taxes, light as they are, are a bugbear to him, and rather than open his purse strings and hand out the cash fruits of his toil, he prefers to give a few days' labour in the year to road-making or other Government work.

They grow on their farms all they need in the way of necessities: maize, hemp, corn, barley, flax, tobacco, and in some districts reap two crops a year. The farmer keeps his savings in an old stocking, and rarely buys more than coffee, matches, sugar, rice or some cotton fabric or gay gaud or handkerchief for his women folk.

They have big herds of sheep and cattle, pigs and lots of geese. Their forests of oak provide tons of acorns for feeding the pigs, and they have lately started the exportation of many hundred head of cattle from Salonika to Egypt. Dairy farming has so far made but little progress, the best butter and cheese being imported and of poor quality. Their chief export, however, is the pig, hundreds of thousands being sent to Germany and Austria every year.

Piggie, who is such a feature in Irish home-life, is as predominant, as lucrative, as squeaking and contumacious an animal in Serbia as in Ireland. Here too, as there, he is

"the gentleman who pays the rent," and can almost be called the staple product of the country. In Serbia, also, he reaches the maximum of upliness: thin, with long legs and arched back, that has a fierce upstanding ridge of dirty yellow bristles, sharp little pink eyes, an enormous snout and ears, he is to be seen everywhere, rooting and nosing round for scraps.

Considering the value of the pig as an expert, and that the founder of the present Karađorđevitch dynasty, Kara-george (who lived and fought in the early nineteenth century), was a humble swineherd, one is tempted to think he might be allotted a place on the national arms: *porcus vulgaris*, on a field azure!

Modern methods of farming have made little way in the country, but when once it has adopted them, the rich soil is bound to give large returns and ensure a boom of agricultural prosperity. Many of the peasants are quite large proprietors of land, and go in extensively for cattle-rearing; the horses they raise, as the Yankee calls it, are of a strong breed, and the strain has been much improved in the last few years. Round their homesteads one sees numbers of acres planted with plum and prune trees, largely cultivated for the making of *slivovitz*, or plum brandy, a national beverage, which does not taste badly. We were too early for the full show of lovely pale plum blossom, which I had last seen in all its wonderful beauty in Japan, but we could imagine how much it would soften and glorify many a hard, unlovely-looking tract of farm land, bare as yet in the early spring sunshine. Among the wealthier peasants an income of one thousand pounds a year is not infrequent; but they are a thrifty people, lead simple homely lives, and have adopted few Western ways and luxuries.

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The position of the women, notwithstanding the so-called Turkish rule and influence, is fairly independent. True, the man generally walks ahead, expecting the woman to walk behind, and she quite often the man have been served, but then many charming *gerashe* show what influence they do exercise, and the position they really hold. "A home is not built on earth but on a woman" is somewhat similar in significance to "There is no home without a wife;" "Blessed are the hands that feed the bread," and, "It is

a lesser sin to burn down a church than to speak evil of a girl," are both charming in their sentiment.

In the "zadruga" all the household affairs are arranged and apportioned to the different women members by the matron or mother, though each wife has her own separate little domicile attached to the big central homestead, which is her own individual concern, and should she find the work or company irksome, she can return to her own home again, but this is rarely done.

They take it in turn to work in the fields or mind the home, are never idle, and do all the spinning and weaving for their household. Their working dress is a short skirt of cream homespun, or sometimes bright blue, thick blue stockings and shoes, loose jacket or bodice, the gay handkerchief binding their heads, and bright embroidered apron.

Some of the fête-day costumes of the wealthier peasants and Serb women are very handsome, such as those worn at weddings and in "Slava" days, especially at Nish, which has far more of a distinctly Serbian tone than Belgrade. The Prishtina district has also a very beautiful and decorative costume, showing more the traces of Turkish influence in the embroidered turned-up-at-the-toe shoe and flat cap of coins on the hair. The long coats of velvet are wonderfully embroidered in a lovely bold design in gold, with rows of round gold buttons the size of a marble down the front; sometimes a brilliant, striped silk sash is worn, and in some districts a lovely stiff veil extended like wings over the ears and beautifully embroidered in gold.

Others wear the beautiful little red fez, wonderfully covered with seed-pearl design, and round this the hair is coiled or plaited. It is most becoming, and the barbaric-looking gold earrings and necklaces set with rough uncut stones made me very envious. It is impossible to buy them: there are no shops in either Serbia or Bulgaria equivalent to the antique or curio shops of other countries. The people are too comfortably off ever to think of parting with them; in fact, they are heirlooms and no longer made. They are so charming that one can only hope that the cheap vulgar German taste in gauds and clothes will never penetrate these countries.

They are a friendly, pleasant people, and will readily let you peep into their homes, which are clean, if rather bare.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

The babies' cradles are very quaint, and are shaped like a small water-trough made of wood. They have no rockers, and cords running through holes on each side permit the mother to sling it on her back when she goes to work.

All the Serb peasants wear brightly woven belts made by the women. They are wound tightly round their waists, and though warm, they are often as bad as tight-lacing in their injurious effects both on men, women and children.

They take the greatest interest in strangers, in fact, they can't ask too many questions as to your home, family, means, and especially age—so much so, that the bar of language is often a real advantage in checking their ardent inquisitiveness, and "ne razumem" (I don't understand), is useful as well as necessarily often on one's lips.

But they are hospitable and kind, and when one knows but little of the language beyond "How much?" "Too much," "Yes," "No," "Quick," and the few other odd phrases, one just widens one's smile, and nods expressive of much understanding and wisdom are exchanged, while "Dobru dan" (good-day) winds up the limited conversation. "Bogami," the equivalent for the French "Mon Dieu," is always on their lips, and generally begins or ends a remark.

Their food consists of onions, *chorba*, a thick soup—this is for festive occasions—*helmet*, a kind of sour, curdled cream, sausages, cheese, and a sort of maize porridge. Though the pasturage is good and their cattle splendid, well-looking beasts, dairy farming is practically non-existent. They have certainly a word for butter—"masto"—but there was never any to be had.

Their meat dishes, which the poorer eat only on feast days, are always very highly flavoured with "paprika," which makes them taste very hot and pungent. One of the greatest delicacies they can offer you is a "lany" pear, brown with age, and it requires some discipline to show an appreciation of the honour! The drumstick of a turkey or chicken is also considered preferable to the white meat, and if you are not very quick in holding on to the piece you have chosen, with your fork, you will find your host, in his anxiety to do you honour, has whipped it off your plate, and the drumstick reigning in its stead!

Marriage is as in all countries, a great ceremony here. It is generally celebrated in the autumn when the harvest is over, and rarely in the spring and summer.

At the gatherings on feast days round the church where they dance the Kola, the father of an eligible son will carefully inspect the marriageable girls, asking his son's opinion as to their dowry and suitability as a wife. The Serbian bridegroom rarely chooses a young wife, and frequently it is a woman a little older than himself, for he marries young—at about the age of twenty-two—while he generally chooses a girl of twenty-five or twenty-seven. It is not often a sentimental choice, but one largely decided by the bride's capability as a worker and housewife, good disposition and healthiness.

When the marriage day has been fixed and all the guests invited, the bride has to set to work to provide presents for all the guests—quite the contrary custom to ourselves, who "stand and receive"! Stockings, belts, vests, rugs, etc., have to be distributed; in fact, so heavy do these wedding-expenses often become, that there has lately grown up the idea of a secret but prearranged elopement, in order to evade the imposition!

The wedding dress is given by the father-in-law, and the bridegroom, attired in his best, and wearing flowers in his hat, arrives on horseback with his best man, "Kum," as he is called, at the church. After the ceremony there is a fine "crack, crack" of guns and pistols, which are fired to celebrate all and every ceremony or jollification. Escorted by the gypsy band they approach the bridegroom's "sadruga" in order that the new wife may greet her parents-in-law, whom she kisses and bows to. Still accompanied by the guests, she goes to her own abode, carrying loaves under her arms and bottles of wine in her hands—the emblems of wealth and prosperity. Arriving there, she has to walk over some freshly strewn corn outside the door, which she must first enter alone, the others following her.

One of the first customs to be observed by the bride is that of prostrating herself before the family hearth, on which the fire is burning—a relic of the old-time fire worship. A vessel of corn is also brought to her, which she scatters "in order that the year may be fruitful," and

finally a little boy is led forward, whom she raises thrice in her arms, kissing him and murmuring her wish that she may have many sons.

The feast then begins. In the centre stands the huge cake, on which is laid the bride's dowry and which is cut in half, while all the guests, sitting on the floor in a circle, lay each a thumb on it for "good luck." Half the cake is sent to the church as an offering to the pop,* while the remainder is consumed by the hungry and hilarious crowd to the accompaniment of pitch and guns. They celebrate every possible occasion with the discharge of their firearms—weddings, harvest feasts, fairs, and in welcoming the returning traveller home or speeding him away. An amusing story was told me about this.

When Mrs. Stobart's hospital unit was retreating to the Albanian coast, some Serbian soldiers were sent with them as escort. When they got into Montenegro, firing was heard in the mountains near, and the Serbs said to the nurses:

"Bogami, let's hurry out of this land; one never knows what these dare-devil Montenegrins are up to with their firing!"

The difference being that it is not in the character of the latter to discharge his firearms for anything but one purpose, and that is not usually celebration.

There is a curious prejudice in Serbia against marriage with cousins, even extending to that of the sixth degree. I was much amused to see occasionally a queer-looking doll hanging up in cottage windows. They were never alike, and I noticed also that on some of the houses a bunch or wreath of wheat-ears was hung on the outer wall. To my astonishment and amusement I was informed that the doll was the coy evidence a widow shows when she desires to enter the bonds of matrimony again. Some of them were hideous; others of as pretty a kind as the circumstances or taste of the "lone widdy" would permit, and it was by this mute appeal intending suitors were made aware of her intentions and invited to "inquire within."

The wreaths of corn marked the houses of a marriageable girl, and they believe that if the wreath be stolen, the daughter will soon be married. One sees it always

well within reach, and composed of choice and tempting ears of wheat !

Bunches of garlic are also hung outside some of the cottages. This is considered a certain protection against the devil and his twin soul, "the evil eye;" and if these gentlemen have perchance the nose and palate we northern people possess, nothing could be more effectual in its purpose !

They are a very superstitious people, and have all sorts of charms regarding the choosing or building of a house, love, marriage, the sex and number of their children, their health and the favourable conditions to be arranged for their entry into the world. The way a dog barks, how the wind whines, the way a man rises in the morning or how he goes to sleep, what he sees first—if a monk, he is sure to have an unlucky day !—how the cock crows : in fact they are hedged round with superstition of every conceivable kind.

They are thrown into great agitation when a partial eclipse of the sun or moon occurs. Pistols are fired, bells are rung, pots and pans are beaten, in order to avert the drought or hailstorms which they are sure are bound to follow the phenomenon, and which prove so disastrous to their fruit or wheat crops.

Not only in their interest in pigs, but in much of their character and many of their traits, they can be considered the Irish of the Balkans. They have as complete a belief in the fairies as any Paddy or Colleen of the Emerald Isle, and impute all sorts of mischief as well as good to them ; and I was shown the curious rings in the meadows and hill-sides that one sees in Scotland and Ireland, and was told that was where the "veele" * danced.

Each house, too, has got its "Syen" or guardian spirit, which they think often takes the form of the devoted horse or dog. A striking instance of this current belief is seen in the feats of the wonderful piebald horse "Sarac" that saved their legendary hero, Marko, from so many dangers.

As in Roumania and Bulgaria, one sees the dead being carried as far as the cemetery with the lid of the coffin off and the face uncovered. They believe that the spirit of

* Fairy.

those who die hangs round the home for forty days. It is customary to hold a service over the grave seven days after the funeral, a second one at six weeks, a third at six months, a fourth at a year, and a final one at three years. If anyone dies in sin and not fortified by the last rites of the Church, they are supposed to linger in the world as vampires, sucking the blood from sleeping children or cattle, and returning to their graves at sunrise. Their usual remedy is to dig up the body, put a stake through it and burn it.

The tombstones in the old Serbian Mohammedan cemeteries are painted in curious primitive colours. They have swords, scimitars and pistols carved on them, and nearly always after the name of the defunct comes, "Here lies the slave of God," but the history of past centuries would show that "Here lies the slave of the Turk" might be more appropriate.

One of the prettiest customs I saw was the little prayer the women make when lighting the big hearth fire. It is symbolic of so much that is charming and poetical in their nature. It is round the blazing logs the whole family gather in the long evenings: the women spinning, the girls embroidering the gay aprons they wear, and the boys listening to the wonderful ballads and legends Serbia is so rich in, and which the women sing as they spin. For they are a singing people, and the women are especially poetical, often composing music to the old ballads as they sing them in the evenings. At work in the fields; leading the slow-footed ox-driven cart through the lonely mountain roads, they sing, solacing themselves on the hillside with the great deeds of past heroes, with only the sheep and birds to listen to them. At weddings and when they dance the Kola—hands joined—they raise their lusty voices in unison, and all over the country from village to village wander the bands of "gusla players,"* who keep the flame of patriotism alive by reciting the epic deeds of the past, the great battles against the infidel, the heroic deeds of Marko and Miloš, battling to free their country from the oppressor.

* The gusla is a long mandolin-shaped instrument of maple wood with one string. The bow is short and very arched. They also play the "svirala" flute and the "kavaljete" or bagpipes, but far less frequently than the gusla.

So great, indeed, is their love for their national ballads and historical legends, that an old saying, as true to-day as then, says :

"The house in which the *gusla* is not heard
Is dead, as well as the people in it."

Many of these *gusla* players are blind and in many respects correspond to the ancient Celtic bards. They are often gifted with second-sight.

The two great heroes Miloš and Marko, whose deeds they chant, performed prodigies of valour. Miloš Obilić, on the eve of the great battle of Kossova, in 1389, found his way into the Turkish camp and slew with his own hand the Sultan Murad. He escaped, and lived to perform many other feats. He is described in the ballads as the "most noble and vehement of heroes," and certainly history has few more vivid incidents to relate. Miloš, accompanied by two soldiers, galloped to the Turkish camp and requested an interview with the commander of the forces, the Sultan Murad. The Sultan, thinking he was going to betray his country, consented; when in front of the divan, Miloš flung himself upon the Sultan, stabbing him, and before the astounded guard could secure him had fled on horse-back.

Murad lingered till next day, his physicians keeping him alive, tradition says, by slaying camels and laying him inside their warm bodies. He expired as they told him victory had fallen to his arms and that the Serbian Tsar had been slain in conflict. Marko is, however, the most famous figure in Serbian legend and song, and always accompanying and aiding the hero in his wonderful exploits was his almost human charger Sarac.

To every southern Slav, Bulgar no less than Serb or Croat, he looms as great a figure in the imagination of the race as Siegfried is to the Teuton, and is symbolic of the never-dying soul of the nation.

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In essential features the character of the Serb remains unchanged, in spite of the many historical vicissitudes of the race, though in particulars it has varied, for it must be remembered that the Serbian race is more or less dis-

passed throughout the Balkans, Macedonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and between the highlands and lowlands of the sea-coast of Dalmatia, and its original character, in accordance with a great law, has been moulded and modified by its varying surroundings.

The southern Slav is more headstrong, quarrelsome and easily inflamed than his northern brother, but has not got the latter's steady persistence in attaining his object. As a people they are poetically gifted in marked degree, and have a good share of physical and intellectual endowment. They are naturally more gifted than the Bulgarians, though the Bulgars have developed their abilities to more advantage than their neighbours. In general, self-will and assertion are marked traits in the Serbian character, and this is supported by their courage and boldness; they respect an oath and their word to their bond.

Their family life is of a very intimate, affectionate nature, and has played a very important part in the history of the country, stamping it with its patriarchal character. Brothers and sisters look for each other a very deep and real affection, and a German writer says that few countries in the world can show a more beautiful relation between its members, and the death of one of the circle means an irreparable loss. A most curious development of this feeling is the swearing of brotherly and sisterly affection between two individuals of different families who feel an affinity for each other. This platonic bond is called *Polubratstvo*—*Posobratstvo*, and drives out the best and finest in their natures. Marriage occasionally results, but the betrayal of such a faith brings with it a terrible curse in the eyes of the people. Friendship and love are no empty words for them, and are pregnant with real meaning. Like the Irish, again, they are lively, sensitive and emotional. Their enthusiasm is easily awakened, and they are somewhat jealous.

In his endurance of pain or suffering the Serb is a stoic. An American Red Cross doctor working among them during the war of 1912 voiced the general opinion of his confrères when he said, "You've not seen heavy till you've seen a Serbian die, or seen these people suffer. I'll take off a hand, an arm, a leg—without an anæsthetic, mind you—and will the fellow budge? Not an eyelid! He may say

'Rerku lete' (Oh dear!), but that's all, and very seldom that much. And die! They'll die without a sound—unless it is to thank you before they go. Where this race of soldiers sprang from I don't know, but make no mistake, they're God's own men."

IV.

A TRAGIC HISTORY.

*"For Greece and people are but walls that swing
And float and fall in endless eddies and flow."*

SERBIAN history is a tragic one. Originally a Slav tribe which overran modern Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro and the Adriatic coast, she rose to be a mighty empire in the past, peopling all the lands from the Danube to the borders of Greece.

About A.D. 860 they embraced Christianity. Their first great king was Stephen, who reigned in 1217, and made Pristina his capital. He was acclaimed King of Serbia, Dalmatia and Bosnia, and was recognized as such by the Pope and both Latin and Greek Emperors.

All these early Serbian kings were called Stephen, which means "a crown," but the greatest of them all was Stephen "Dusan" (the strangler), who was believed to have strangled his own father. A man of striking personal appearance, great abilities and wisdom, he compiled a remarkable code of laws which brought him fame even beyond his own dominions. He made himself master of the greater part of the Balkan Peninsula, extending from the Adriatic to the river Maritza in the East, and from the Danube to the Aegean Sea, and was proclaimed Emperor of the Greeks and Serbs at Uskub in 1346. He marched victoriously against Constantinople, but when within only forty miles of the city he died by poison. He was succeeded by his son, Tsar Uroš, a weak, vacillating ruler who inherited none of his father's masterful character, and as in these days of early Balkan civilization the empire depended on the personality and strength of will of one man, so when he disappeared chaos often supervened. After his death

the Turks overran his kingdom, and finally so annihilated the Serbs on the bloody field of Kossova (field of black-birds), in 1389, that the Serbian Empire was swept out of existence.

But you cannot kill a national spirit : though the body be dismembered the spirit still lives undaunted. After a long period of oppression and slavery the Serbian peasantry rose in rebellion against the Turks in 1804, choosing as their leader George Petrovitch or Kara George (Black George), the grandfather of the present King Peter of Serbia, and the son of a peasant and swineherd.

He was a remarkable man, full of the violent energy and primitive force that fitted him in those days to be the deliverer of his country.

There are many stories told of his wild, taciturn nature, which had, however, its better side of rude justice, great courage and lack of vindictiveness.

When war broke out between Austria and Turkey, Kara George fled to join the Austrian ally, taking his father, family and cattle rather than they should fall into the hands of the Turks.

Near the frontier his father implored him to stop, saying, "Let us humble ourselves to the Turk and we shall obtain pardon," but it was of no avail. The old man resorted to threats, saying he would denounce Kara George and all his family. The latter reasoned and pleaded with him in the name of his Fatherland and cause, but the old man remained obdurate. Finally Kara George whipped out his revolver with the words : "How shall I live to see thee slowly tortured to death by the Turks ? It is better for thee to die than betray thy country, thy family and thy cause," and he shot him dead, leaving all his cattle to be divided amongst the peasants, after having made them promise to give him decent burial.

Many other stories are to be told of this elemental nature, which when roused to anger by injustice or wanton cruelty became a terrible judge.

The brother he most dearly loved he condemned to death for outraging a girl. A pop (priest) refused to bury the father of a penniless orphan unless he was paid fifty piastres. This the poor orphan was quite unable to do. In despair he appealed to Kara George for the money.

He was given the fifty piastres, but was ordered to dig two graves. Accompanied by some soldiers and a second coffin, Kara George arrived at the cemetery for the funeral. The pop was asked, "How many children have you?" "Five have been vouchsafed me," was the reply. "Well," said this merciless judge, "as your children may some day find themselves in the same destitute condition as this poor orphan, I myself will pay for your funeral now." So saying, he handed fifty piastres to the pop, who was at once killed by the soldiers and buried in the second coffin.

But this savage justice and fierce patriotism were just the qualities necessary in a chief at such a time. He was a born leader of men, inspiring his people with courage, but striking terror into the heart of the Turk. Under him the country gained its independence, but for a brief decade only, and was reconquered by Turkey in 1813. A few years later, however, a fresh insurrection under Miloš Obrenovitch was completely successful, and in 1815 Serbia again regained her independence. Kara George returned, but was assassinated by order of Miloš, the founder of the Obrenovitch dynasty, whose great-nephews were respectively King Milan (who abdicated in 1889), and King Alexander, Milan's son (who was assassinated with his Queen, Draga, in 1903).

The years from 1815, when Prince Miloš Obrenovitch gained for Serbia her independence, up to the death of Alexander and Draga, show a mournful record of depositions, jealousy and intrigue between the rival dynasties of the houses of Obrenovitch and Karageorgevitch, the latter of which the present King Peter represents.

Milan Obrenovitch, who came to the throne in 1868 at the age of fourteen, reigned for twenty years. He increased his territory at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish war, and by the Treaty of Berlin was proclaimed King of Serbia in 1882.

He had been educated in Paris, and his inclinations and tastes were all towards a life of amusement and self-indulgence. He was quite unfitted for the duties of a king over a country whose tempestuous history—strangled and reborn again and again—its intrigues, plots and constantly shifting rulers, had made of it the cockpit of Europe.

He increased the difficulties of his position by his mar-

riage with a beautiful Russian, Mlle. Kechko, who espoused with ardour the Russian influence, while King Milan himself favoured that of Austria, for which country an implacable hatred existed amongst his people.

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It is a curious thing how the destinies of all the Obrenovitch princes have been dominated and controlled by some woman. True, all history is illuminated by the eternal feminine—for good or for evil they weave those intangible chains that hamper or aid the destinies of those they cling to, their love an inspiration for the great deeds and aims of men in all ages, or a negation and abasement of his better nature.

In glancing over the histories of these several princes, it is startling to see the mysterious influence, fateful in every case, that women have exerted in unbroken sequence on this dynasty. Milosh I., the founder, spent his last years exiled owing to the political intrigue of his wife Princess Lubitza, who had deeply resented his constant infidelity to her. Michael Obrenovitch, one of the best and most patriotic of Serbia's rulers, divorced his beautiful but blameless wife, for the love of his cousin Katherina, thus giving the Karageorge pretender the excuse to sow the seeds of distrust and suspicion among his people. He was murdered in 1868.

The story of King Milan's infatuation and marriage to the lovely but self-willed Mlle. Nathalie Kechko, whom he met in Vienna, and with whom he fell so desperately in love that all the projected plans for an alliance with a Russian or German princess came crashing down to the ground like a house of cards, is well known. A lovely, imperious, intelligent girl with a beauty the inheritance of her mixed ancestry—for Russian, Roumanian and Greek blood ran in her veins—she had, however, neither the training nor the nature to hold the position she had won, nor the affections of the capriciously susceptible King.

After a year or two's brief happiness, the union resolved itself into a relentlessly bitter domestic duel of hatred and recrimination that was fought out ignominiously before the eyes of all Europe, and which ended in the exile of the Queen and the abdication of the King in favour of his little son Alexander.

Born in the exciting days of the war with Turkey, when Serbia was struggling for her independence, Alexander passed the years of his childhood happily enough, but the growing unhappiness and discord between his parents threw its shadow very early over the boy's life, and he became the shuttlecock tossed about between the battle-axes of their mutual hatred and suspicion. Each vowed and protested their love for their son, at the same time bitterly intriguing for the possession of his person. What wonder that the poor, distracted boy lost his bearings and that these painful scenes nearly killed his love for his parents!

In 1888 King Milan appealed for a divorce from the Serbian Church. At first it was found impossible to obtain, as the Queen was an absolutely virtuous woman. However, after some difficulty a divorce was secured from the Greek Orthodox Church and the marriage was dissolved.

The constant intrigues, quarrellings and final disruption of the union had caused great dissatisfaction and disgust among the Serbian people, and the following year, 1889, King Milan abdicated in favour of Alexander, who was now in his thirteenth year.

The boy was naturally gentle and affectionate, of a quiet disposition and with a good intelligence, but the loneliness of his childhood—for he had no companions or playmates—and the unhappy atmosphere of his home combined to check his natural impulses, to exercise a pernicious influence on his character, and to hinder the unfolding of all that was best and noblest in him. No chance was given him, and but little guidance in developing high aims and kingly attributes. Indeed the following years, spent under rigid tutelage and an unyielding Russian Regency, served only to strengthen a despotic assurance at the expense of the wider and more liberal qualifications needed in a constitutional monarch.

His mother, Queen Nathalie, after her cruel and ignominious expulsion from Serbia, had settled at Biarritz, and late on the big cliffs of the Falaise—with their gorgeous outlook over the restless waters of the bay and the long shadowy chain of mountains on the Spanish coast—had built herself a charming villa called *Sashino*, or the House of Sasha, for she always called her son by the fond Russian diminutive of Alexander-Sasha.

She chose as her *dame d'honneur* Draga Maschin, the

widow of a poor Serbian doctor, and the granddaughter of a friend and supporter of Milosh I. It was largely due to this latter fact that when Madam Maschin was left a widow with small means and a still smaller pension—pretty, charming, and alone, among the dangers and temptations that pretty widows are exposed to in Eastern capitals, that the Queen, who was very kind-hearted, took her into her household.

Alexander was twenty-one at this time, and for some time his Government had been trying to force him to make up his mind to marriage with one of the foreign princesses. But the Prince was reluctant, evasive. No shaft from the blind god's bow had as yet pierced his heart, and unlike his father, who was a great *galant*, Alexander had hitherto shown himself quite impervious to the fascinations of *les beaux yeux*, and in the presence of women was gauche and shy.

It was during a visit to his mother at Biarritz in 1894 that Alexander succumbed to his first and only love, an overmastering passion, deep and true, but which brought murder and disaster in its wake.

Draga, which means "dear one" in Serbian, was at this time about twenty-eight, some years older than the King, and in appearance she was not unprepossessing. She was of medium height, with the pale complexion that is general among the upper-class women of Eastern Europe; dark hair, a charming smile, and beautiful brown eyes that had a very appealing charm of expression in them. Her manner was gentle yet lively, and her whole personality was of the distinctly feminine type that especially appeals to a man. Like her royal mistress, her appearance gained no embellishment from the accessories of dress; neither of them had any taste or individuality in this direction, and though I saw them many times, on no occasion have I seen them but in ill-chosen and nondescript gowns; in fact, the Queen, who had a plump figure and well-developed feet and ankles, had a *penchant* for very short gowns, white stockings and low black shoes—a style which was anything but the fashion then. Later, when she became Queen, Draga displayed a more artistic feeling for her clothes, which the best *ateliers* of Paris supplied.

Queen Nathalie had a very quick temper and had always been extremely wilful, while Draga's nature was a gentle,

tactful one, and she seemed perfectly devoted to her Royal mistress. She was certainly devoutly thankful to have secured such a comfortable position entirely through the real kindness of heart of the Queen, who had overlooked—in her desire to help Madame Maschán—the flighty and uncertain existence she had formerly led in Belgrade as a poor but pretty widow.

I remember going to a party given by the Queen at the Villa Naska one winter, when there was a Christmas-tree, from which charming little gifts were distributed to the guests, and what sympathy and accord there seemed to exist between the Queen and her lady-in-waiting, whom she called Draga in affectionate tones.

Naska's wooing—which was apparently quite unnoticed by his mother, who thought probably that the difference in age and the generally accepted belief as to the King's indifference to all women rendered such a thing impossible—was, like all the pent-up emotions of deep, reserved natures, a strong, gradually increasing passion, that the resistance of its object only seemed to strengthen and confirm. The young people were constantly thrown together, bathing, riding and bicycling, and one passed them continually on the country roads around Biarritz. On one occasion I met them when Draga's bicycle had broken down, and the young King was trying to repair it, his short-sighted eyes scanning carefully the evidences of damage, while she stood close beside him—a lover and his lass for any ordinary eye to see—but the Queen was blind and suspected nothing.

During the absence of the King in Serbia the young couple corresponded regularly. In the following year one of the King's ardent love-letters fell into the Queen's hands. She was dumfounded at the discovery of her son's infatuation, and in a fury dismissed her *dame d'honneur*. Alexander saw his chance, and bringing all the force of his love and pleading to bear, persuaded Draga to come back to Belgrade, there to live under his protection.

Three years passed thus, but in 1890 the Government again approached the King with serious proposals for his marriage with a foreign princess. The King apparently took a satisfactory view of their wishes, though he begged for a little delay, but at the bottom of his heart he was

furiously at the prospect of his happiness with Draga being disturbed.

This faithful lover—the extraordinary son of a phenomenally light father—loved his mistress even more deeply and passionately than before: his country, his people, his duties were swept as by a whirlwind before the fire of his passion. His destiny had caught him, bound him, enthralled him, for a great passion is one of those overwhelming human emotions which no wisdom can avert, no sophistry control. His one desire was to marry the woman he had chosen and none other, and he declared, "If I cannot marry Draga as king, I will leave Serbia for ever, and marry her as a private individual. In the whole world there is but one woman who can make me forget the bitterness of my past life—I am passionately in love with her, and without her I cannot live."

His determination was taken; he acted energetically, and his marriage took place at once. The following three years were spent by the King and Queen in Belgrade, vainly endeavouring to establish good relations between themselves and their people, but the marriage and his autocratic rule had profoundly disgusted and enraged the nation, and constant abortive conspiracies kept the Royal couple on the rack of suspense. Had there been an heir born to them all might yet have gone well, for much would have been forgiven had the dynasty been secured, but such a hope could never be realized.

The Queen's influence over the King was great, and was unfortunately not only confined to domestic affairs, but was used to ensure the promotion of her friends and relations, and the anger and exasperation of the people reached its climax when she tried to enforce the nomination of her brother as heir to the throne.

The abdication of the King was now the one desire of the nation, for the people were furious with his ruthless, high-handed behaviour. Five *coups d'état* and twenty-four ministries marked his short reign, which culminated in the headstrong folly of his marriage. But the King was stubborn; he knew the risk; he took his choice and remained on the now rocking throne. His pro-Austrian tendencies, the growing disorganization of the finances, a general sense of failure that the follies and misgovernment of its rulers had engendered in the nation, caused a discontent, bitter

but comparatively passive ; the Army, however, was actively disaffected, and a military conspiracy brought about the inevitable catastrophe.

Finding all efforts to force the King to abdicate fruitless, a few of them banded together to plan one of those tragic dramas so often met with in the world's history.

The night of June 10th, 1903, was chosen for the final coup. At eleven o'clock at night, when the town was wrapped in slumber, the chief conspirators surrounded the Palace, suborned the guard and were admitted to the Palace courtyard. A loyal sergeant of the guard rushed to give the alarm, but was shot dead. The noise disturbed General Petrovitch, first aide-de-camp to the King, who was still up. He rushed out and was fired at and killed. The conspirators then headed for the entrance door of the Palace, which it had been arranged should be opened to them beforehand. The intruders, disappointed in this, blew the door open with a dynamite cartridge and swarmed into the Palace.

The terrible roar was heard all over the town, rousing many people from their sleep to wonder what had happened. It had destroyed the electric lighting, and the crowd of men groped about in the dark Palace, cursing and swearing. Candles were obtained, and a search of the Palace ensued—under sofas, beds—behind curtains, screens, doors—beating the walls with their swords to discover cupboards where their victims might have taken refuge. Their bedroom was empty, evidences of their hurried flight shown in its disorder. Over the chairs and sofas in the adjoining dressing-room still hung the lovely gowns from Paris which had only arrived that evening and which the Queen had been trying on before retiring to rest ; filmy chiffons and lace, sumptuous velvet and silks were tossed to the floor in the hurried search.

And what of the Royal pair ? Roused by the cries and deafening roar of dynamite, they knew that the terrible suspense, the overwhelming apprehension that had racked them for the last year had reached its limit. A small alcove used as a closet for clothes reached by a secret door in the wall of their bedroom, and so effectually concealed by the wall-paper that it was invisible, was their refuge. Shut in here, they could hear through the walls the excited breathing of the conspirators as they vainly ransacked the apartments.

What must have been their sufferings, their feelings, as husband and wife clung to each other in this imminent hour of death, he silently pressing the shivering, fainting woman in his arms as the minutes which seemed an eternity slipped into an hour, and their minds reeled at the thought of their fate. God knows they suffered enough in that terrible hour of suspense and paid supremely for their headstrong, wayward wills in the past!

The conspirators, not finding them, were searching some other parts of the Palace, when the Queen, creeping cautiously to the tiny window which lighted the alcove and looked on to the street—the street with its many houses of slumbering people—drew the blind gently aside and peered into the semi-darkness that comes before the dawn. A footfall resounded among the bushes below between the Palace and the street, and leaning forward with agonized eyes trying to pierce the gloom, she recognized a sentinel of the Guard. Almost delirious with the wave of relief at seeing one of the household, and never dreaming of his defection, she raised the window and screamed, "Soldiers! Your King is in danger! For God's sake to the rescue—to the rescue!"

The guard, who had been bribed, turned and fired at the Queen! He missed her, and turning, fled swiftly up the staircase to the bewildered conspirators, shouting to them where they were hidden. They dashed up to the Royal apartments again. With an axe they broke down the secret door, and the King and Queen in their night attire stood within. . . .

The conspirators surged towards them, and Alexander, stepping forward to shield the Queen, cried out: "What is it you want—what of your oath of allegiance to your King?" A moment of deathlike silence, and then, riddled with bullets, they fell.

Late the next night the bodies were removed to a humble grave in the little chapel of S. Mark. No Royal tomb marks the spot, no inscription reveals their last resting-place. Beneath a simple slab of stone, behind a creaking door, they sleep—unknown hands have laid rough wooden crosses there, one has "Alexander Obrenovitch" seared upon it, the other "Draga Obrenovitch." Dusty and neglected, there they lie, curt records of their tragic reign and death.

Many nations have given way in moments of fanatic im-

pulse or political intrigues to crimes that blot darkly their civilized record. The fate of Charles I. has cast a long shadow over the fair scroll of English history—the doom meted out to Louis of France and Marie Antoinette, his Queen, by the tragic devilry of the masses, clinched a terrible era of blood and terror that rocked France to its very foundations. Portugal, in more recent times, has passed through a similar tragic phase in the assassination of her King and Crown Prince, and Spain also in the attempted murder of the King on his wedding-day. Anarchism, that sinister power which, blinded by a misconception of true humanity, and with no purely honest aims for the welfare or amelioration of mankind, yet brutally, relentlessly wars against all authority, all government, has almost wrecked the thrones of Italy and Russia, but has failed to subvert one or the other.

The passage of time and the beneficent effects of King Peter's just and upright rule have already obliterated the memories of those dark and stormy days, and England's friendship has largely served to confirm the nation in the path of true political progress.

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A curious instance of clairvoyance in connection with this tragedy occurred in London three months before it actually took place. The facts are so astonishing that even the most determinedly sceptical unbeliever in things psychic can hardly explain or refute it. M. Mytsovitch, who was Serbian Minister to the Court of St. James at the time, and is one of the most distinguished intellectual and gifted diplomatists of the Balkan Peninsula, has vouched for the following.

He, together with several other friends, had been invited by Mr. Steel to a séance, at which a well-known psychometrist was going to give a demonstration of her powers. The lady was a Mrs. Burchell, a straightforward North Country woman, not a professional psychic, and the sensible homely mother of ten children!

A large company had assembled to witness the tests, but the early part of the afternoon was a failure owing to adverse conditions, and Mrs. Burchell retired to a quiet room upstairs, where things went more satisfactorily than in the crowded reception-room below. After dinner, when the

party had shrunk to a more modest size, Mrs. Burchell intimated she was ready for some more tests. One of the guests, who had travelled in Serbia and the Balkans, brought with him an envelope inside of which on a sheet of paper he had written the name of the King of Serbia in Cyrillic characters. After some other experiments had been successfully tried this envelope was handed to her to see if she could describe the person whose name was inscribed inside, merely by handling the envelope and without extracting the sheet of paper on which the name was written.

She grasped the envelope, turning it over in her fingers once or twice. After a moment's pause, she cried, "A Royalty! an important person—a King!"

The listeners pressed eagerly forward as in a breathless tone and very quickly she described the room which she seemed to see and in which he was standing. "He is dark; a stout body, long neck; with him is a lady, the Queen—a brunette, and there," pointing to a corner in the room, "I see a child."

Her voice rose excitedly as she cried, "Terrible! Terrible! It is all bloody—I cannot bear to look—Oh! it is terrible—a dark man is rushing into the room, he tries to kill the King, the lady implores them to spare them. Oh——"

With a moan of horror Mrs. Burchell fell on her knees, crying, "They are killing him. Oh, save him! save him! Oh, what tumult, what bloodshed! How terrible! they're killing him, they fling her on one side and stab her with a dagger—Oh! Oh——"

Quite exhausted and quivering with emotion she gasped and nearly fell. One of the party, also a good medium, caught the envelope as it fell from Mrs. Burchell's nerveless fingers, and in a state of great agitation continued the thread of the recital, exclaiming:

"Yes, yes, I see it too—Oh! the blood, how horrible! Look how dark it is. See, the soldiers are coming upon them, shooting all they meet."

Someone called out:

"What are they like?"

"They seem to me like Russian uniforms, but it is dark, I cannot see clearly, now the King is dead. What confusion, what bloodshed!"

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

This thrilling scene was described without either medium or any of the assembled company—with the exception of the giver of the envelope, Mr. L. and Mr. Stead's secretary—knowing what was written inside it, and excited inquiries from everyone were at once lodged as to what was in the envelope. Who was the King? etc. Mr. L. drew out the paper, on which the name of the King, "Alexander," was written in Cyrillic characters.

"Who is Alexander?" everyone asked.

"The King of Serbia," said he; "the Palace, the King, the Queen! her description is exact."

Thus the extraordinary foretelling of a drama by quiet, middle-class folk who knew nothing beyond perhaps the mere fact that Serbia existed and had a king—a drama that was to be enacted three months later on the lines related, the only discrepancy being the presence of a child; but the Russian uniforms are well explained by the fact that the Serbian army is modelled on the Russian type and their uniforms are extremely similar.

The Serbian Minister, M. Miyatovitch, was so impressed by this experience that he at once wrote to the King informing him of what had occurred at the séance and imploring him to take every precaution, as an attempt would be made to assassinate him in the Palace. This letter was dispatched to the King by registered mail on March 28th, but the King was no believer in psychic phenomena and the warning went unheeded.

V.

THE SUPREME TRIAL.

"Over thy creation of beauty there is a mist of tears."—TAGORE.

THE present ruler, King Peter, a grandson of the Serbian national hero, Karageorge, was the claimant to the throne for the rival dynasty. He led rather a retired life, passed chiefly between Paris and Geneva, until the tragic fate of Alexander opened the way to a throne for him. He married, some twenty odd years ago, one of the handsome daughters of that picturesque old figure, King Nicholas of Montenegro, who has provided brides for so many of the Princes of Europe. With regard to this an amusing story is told of King Nicholas.

He was entertaining a traveller of distinction at Cetinje and they had been discussing politics, his country, people, etc. Finally, the guest said, "Well, now as to exports; I suppose you export very little that is valuable?" To which the Prince, with a twinkle in his eye, responded, "You forget my daughters!" And indeed several of them have made brilliant alliances.

King Peter's wife, the Princess Zorka, did not live long, and died in Montenegro, where her children were born, some years ago, leaving a family of three: Princess Hélène, Prince George and Prince Alexander. Prince George is clever, but headstrong and undisciplined, and has renounced his succession in favour of his younger brother, Prince Alexander, who is now Heir Apparent. Prince Alexander is thus a pure bred Serbian on both sides, unlike the rulers of the neighbouring countries, who are of foreign birth. Owing to King Peter's ill-health, he was made Prince Regent in 1914, shortly before the declaration of war by Austria. Though so young—he is just twenty-seven—he has commanded three

was in four years, the first Balkan war against Turkey in 1912, the war against their traitorous ally Bulgaria, who attacked them the following year, and the supreme command of the army during the present campaign. He is studious, conscientious, very capable and devoted to his country's best interests; a fine soldier, an able diplomatist, the serious wars his country has been engaged in have tested his character and ability to the utmost, and he has justly earned the deep love and devotion of the people, while he is adored by the Army.

It is a dangerous game, this making of kings, and here in the Balkans, where the shadow of unrest and intrigue lies so somberly, the position of a monarch is not an enviable one. He is often but a pawn, a puppet in the hands of the party who have placed him upon the throne—clever, adventurous men who will stake anything for political ambition and power. He must needs go warily, for plots can spring up in the night like mushrooms; and he knows but too well the stern mood of the men who raised him to his precarious throne, and the lurking dread of how easily they can cast him from it, be he unworthy.

That wise saying of one of Queen Victoria's Ministers—who begged her to abandon her idea of asking Parliament to confer the title of King on the Prince Consort, "If you teach the English people that they can make a King, you will teach them they can also unmake him," is but too true of every country and every people.

King Peter did not hesitate to take the throne of the storm-tossed country offered him, heavy though its perils and difficulties might be. It was his by lineal descent—a grandson of Karageorge, Liberator of Serbia—and he determined to uphold the tradition of his ancestor and endeavour to raise his country out of the abyss of shame and national despair into which she had fallen.

The moment was critical, for Austria had long cast eyes of envy at her neighbouring state, and was only waiting for an excuse to cross the Danube, and, with the pretext of maintaining order, occupy the country. Vast empire though she is, her arms were stretching, and one of them has already successfully encircled the once Serbian provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia's position, between Austria, Russia and Turkey.

has ever been a precarious one, and her history shows a determined struggle against their encroachments. By intrigues they have continually endeavoured to foment a state of unrest, for this condition, of course, offered a fairer field for their operations than one of peace and prosperity. Those big dogs of the East stood waiting to wrest the bone from the smaller dog—the little dog slain, the bone looked very tempting lying there unguarded. But King Peter grasped his difficult task with vigour, and though confronted with innumerable difficulties, by his dignity, irreproachable regard for constitutional rule and sagacity, gradually removed the dark shadow that was hanging over the country and inaugurated an era of progress and prosperity. Quiet and studious, his martial traits are well marked, and his military bearing and strong interest in the Army have endeared him to the people.

His past record of active service in the Franco-German war, during which he distinguished himself, and his active sympathy and participation with the Serbians during the rebellion in Bosnia, have shown him to be a man of no idle pretensions. He takes his charge seriously, works carefully, and is simple and abstemious in his tastes.

A curious trait in his character is the curiosity shown in his collecting every possible account from newspapers and books, of the crime which paved the way to his accession. Five big volumes hold the several records of the tragedy.

He leads a quiet life, works hard, and holds the unsteady reins of power with tact, firmness and judgment, very ably seconded by his Premier, M. Pashitch, and undoubtedly the country has made good progress beneath his rule.

England had recalled her Minister at the time of the tragedy, and refused for some time to recognize the new régime. She was the only Power that had acted consistently in this matter. When King Peter was crowned with the iron crown, made from the first cannon used by his ancestor Karageorge against his foe the Turk, the other Powers sent their Ministers, whom they had recalled but a short while before in protest of the tragedy, back to Belgrade to salute the new King and resume their posts. But England would not recognize a government which, by granting office to those implicated in the tragedy, seemed to sanction it.

Shortly after this, at the Court held on New Year's Day, another hitch arose, for the Ministers declared they would not attend unless the regicides were excluded from this function.

This could not be complied with, and the Powers again recalled their representatives. Russia, whose interest and encouragement of the Slav race is fundamental, was the first to re-establish diplomatic relations, and the other Powers, especially Austria and Germany—jealous, suspicious, and unwilling to allow Russia a monopoly of influence—speedily dispatched their representatives in turn.

England only held aloof. But at last convinced of the sincerity of the Government's intentions, and of the King's anxiety to legitimately further the true interests of his people by peaceful means, she fell into line with the other Powers, and sent her representative.

The delay of Great Britain in recognizing King Peter touched acutely the pride of the Serbians, but in their heart they realized and admitted the more consistent attitude of England, and were glad at the recognition at last accorded them by a Power whose good opinion and support they valued.

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The successful termination of the Balkan War of 1913 had greatly enlarged Serbian territory, giving her back some of her ancient lands in Macedonia, inhabited by people of her race, and a season of prosperity and progress now settled down over the country.

By the Treaty of Bucharest, which ended the last war, Serbia was, however, deprived of the principal object of her war, an outlet on the Adriatic Sea. This was due to the intrigue and jealous influence of her neighbour Austria, who, having in 1908 annexed the Serb-peopled provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina—which, set free from actual Turkish rule, she had long pretended to protect—was determined, if she could, to incorporate the Kingdom of Serbia, which adjoins, within her Empire.

A country without a port cannot hope for expansion or indeed existence, and it was a severe blow to Serbian aspirations when Great Britain, in the Balkan War, sanctioned the Austrian dog-in-the-manger policy, and she was deprived of the fruit of her war.

Under the steady, enlightened rule of King Peter, and the wise statesmanship of M. Pashitch, the country had recovered its position and influence, lost during the troubled, autocratic, irresponsible reign of King Alexander. It seemed as if the long history of tragedies that had overwhelmed the country in the past was over, and that this land of promise was going to bloom again.

But the spirits of war and hatred had only slumbered, and like Fafner, came rumbling forth from the cavern again.

Austria's policy of governing conquered states is the same as that of her German ally, one of suppression and tyranny, to the incessant accompaniment of the rattling sabre and the mailed fist. She deals with all those different nationalities that she has swept into her net according to the principle :

"Quickly show a brother's love ere it's too late,
Or with this stick I'll break your pate."

Her tyranny is on a par with that of Germany, who to-day, before they have annexed Belgium—the country they attacked like a sneak and a poltroon—fearing to face the French frontier direct—have endeavoured, though vainly, to banish the national language from the streets of Brussels and Antwerp and public life, by military authority. Can we imagine England forbidding the natives of India or Egypt to speak their mother tongue?

Austria's rapacious hand had been stretched out for years towards Serbia, for it was through this land that the road lay to Salonika, the goal of her ambition.

Serbia was a veritable Naboth's vineyard to her, that she coveted and desired above all things. No intrigue, no calumny, was too sharp even prompted by the Machiavellian minds of Berlin, to force an issue or to create a rupture which would bring her into possession of the envied lands, and place Germany astride the Danube on her Juggernaut progress to the East.

Every kind of persecution and pretext for bringing about a quarrel was fomented by Austria, but the final opportunity came in 1914. Like a tiny cloud on the horizon it rose at first, spreading later into a vast welter that covered the heavens from the glory of God, and drenched the world in a torrent of blood and misery.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

On June 28th, 1914, while visiting Bosnian-Serbo territory annexed by Austria, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Heir Apparent to the throne, and his wife were assassinated, by a bomb thrown by an Austrian subject, in the capital Sarajevo. The actual murderer, Princip, and the bomb-thrower, Celinevitch, were Bosnians, and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment, while five Serbs not concerned in the murder were sentenced to death. The authorities at Sarajevo had warned the Vienna police that due precautions should be taken for the safety of the Archduke during his visit to an alien and annexed territory, but their warnings were completely disregarded.

No adequate precaution was taken to insure their safety, and no effort was provided even after the first attempt to shoot them had failed. None of the civil or military authorities responsible for this failure in their duty to guard the Heir to the throne were punished, and it looked very like as if disaffected Austro-Hungarian influence had also been at work in the plot. For the Archduke had many enemies, who feared the day he would ascend the throne.

It is a fact that General Potiorek, who was chiefly at fault, was actually rewarded by being given command of the Bosnian armies that subsequently operated against Serbia.

Here was the favourable pretext for the crushing of Serbia, and, incited by the Butcher of Potsdam, Austria delivered an ultimatum to Serbia of so arrogant and arbitrary a nature as had never before been presented to a free and independent State.

But Austria and Germany are the past-masters in the dispatch of insolent and arbitrary notes, as the only big neutral Power, America, has only too good reason to know. For she has suffered long the tortuous diplomatic methods of these bullying Powers.

Serbia, though resenting the ultimatum as a most unjust and infamous demand on her liberties, to save the peace of Europe accepted the humiliating conditions at once on every point but two, which she asked should be referred to the decision of the Hague Tribunal, or to the Great Powers.

Let us carefully note this. The Serbian answer *accepting* the conditions was delivered to the Austrian Ambassador on the afternoon of July 25th, 1914. Thirty-two minutes

later, the Ambassador broke off negotiations, and he and his staff left the Serbian capital. For Austria, backed by Germany, intended under any and all circumstances to begin a war against Serbia, even at the risk of a great European conflict.

Russia, the big protecting brother of these Slav countries, who from time immemorial has been united to them by the ties of blood, community of race and religion, political traditions and interests, refused to see this little brother crushed, annihilated and absorbed by the arrogant greed of Austria, who, even when her demands had been accepted, refused to stay the march of her troops into Serbia.

With an incredible courage and dash, Serbia met the onslaught of the great Power, who, with an absolutely fresh and gigantic army, looked as if it was fore-ordained to crush the little country, still exhausted and impoverished from her recent terrible Turco-Bulgar War of only a year before.

Magnificently she withstood the Austrian hosts, and in November 1914 dealt them such a crushing defeat that the Austrian rout resembled leaves driven before a winter wind.

The Austrians attacked with five army corps, and in twelve days' desperate whirlwind fighting the Serbs drove them out of their country with a loss of 100,000 men, and almost everything the enemy had in guns and supply trains.

How fierce the fighting was can be gathered from the fact that one Serbian regiment—over 900 strong—was left after two days' fighting with only 72 survivors and one officer.

The peasants saw the Austrians march through their country in insolent triumph early in November, and return ragged, freezing and fugitive in December.

During the ensuing months, while Austria was re-organizing her defeated and scattered troops, the dreaded typhus swept over Serbia, devastating what the war had left undone.

In every village and over nearly every gateway and door the black flag was flying, sure signal of the dread enemy within. Some villages were so festooned with this tragic signal that they looked as if decorated for a Royal Funeral Procession. The gay head coverings of the peasant women all disappeared, and a sombre black replaced the yellow, red or blue of happier days.

The mortality and destruction of life was terrible, but

England, France and America sent hospital doctors and ambulances: wonderful and generous work was voluntarily given by women doctors and nurses, who put up with every privation and trial, in their splendid devotion to the suffering people.

And all this time Austria was preparing for the final *revanche*. Unable to subdue this handful of heroic people alone, she waited till Germany and Bulgaria could join her, and with their combined hosts, close in on the little country on three sides, and deal her the final death-blow.

Serbia stood at bay—magnificent in her unquenchable spirit, valour and the deep faith she reposed in her Allies. And only history will unfold why they came too late. . . .

Every heart in England went out to this gallant little nation, as it fought desperately in the blizzards and snows of the rugged Balkan ranges, contesting every inch of ground with a courage, a heroism, that laughed in the face of death. Never did a nation face its martyrdom so bravely, and with the name of Belgium, Serbia will for ever be written in letters of flame on the world's banner of honour.

And of Greece, bound to her Ally and neighbour by treaty and obligation, what can be said of her defection? Surely will come the day, when, faced by her strengthened and relentless enemy Bulgaria, she will rue the moment she allowed her Ally to be overwhelmed, and ignored her honourable obligations.

* * * * *

"Have ye fled in the darkly dawn
 Hidden it was yet too late—
 With a child in your arms new-born,
 Leaving orphans to find their fate?"

"Our altars were foul with blood
 When we came to the homes we'd fled;
 Smelt the reek of our kinsmen's blood—
 Thro' the God that the dead were dead."

ALBERT HARRIS.

But what are words to depict the desperate flight of an entire nation, fleeing before the unmentionable atrocities and savagery that the Huns and Bulgars have made their names famous for in the twentieth century! . . . In icy blizzards, roads often only cart tracks at the best of times, now impassable in deep snow and slush—fording the freezing rivers

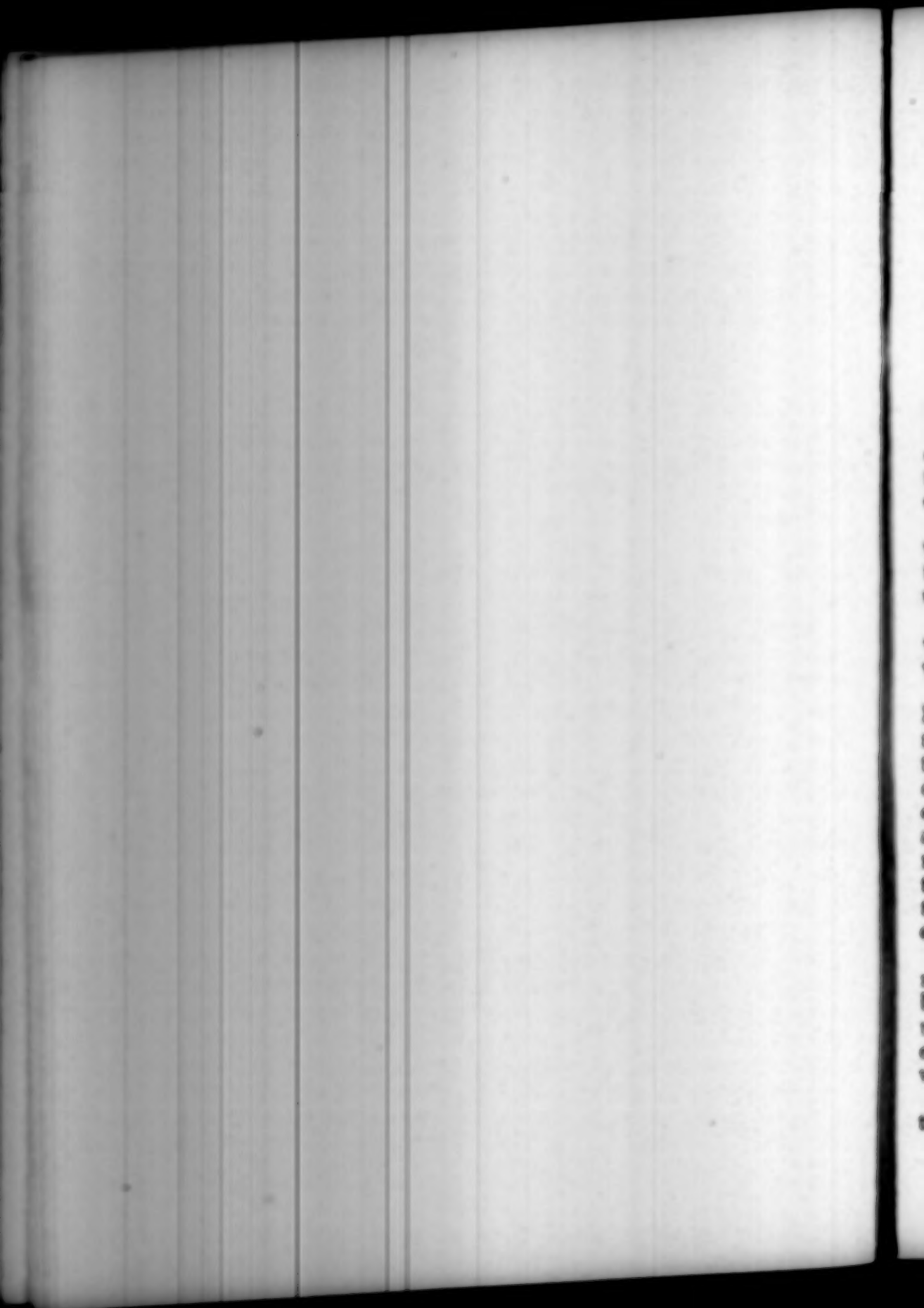
—sleeping as they dropped exhausted on the snowy roads at night—many never to wake again—climbing over the terrible Albanian or Montenegrin mountains, with fierce hostile tribes near, ready to shoot and refuse them bread or shelter ! Delicate women, babies just born, little children, old men, trudging footsore and famished. . . . And the girls flying—flying from the doom meted out to Belgian girls—what a path of tragedy, misery and desolation ! And behind them, coming closer and closer, the deep boom of the guns and the gallant and diminishing army fighting to its heroic last. . . .

A single ration of bread had to last the soldier three days, and wonderful instances of a self-sacrificing spirit of humanity were shown by them in sharing even this small portion with the famished fugitives. So terrible was the weather of blizzards and snow over those impassable mountains, so spent were the soldiers, escorting their convoy of 50,000 Austrian prisoners (even the criminals from the gaols were brought, in order that as few able-bodied Serbs as possible should fall into Bulgaro-Hun hands), that when the first 4,000 men of the Serbian Army were transported to Corfu, 900 died of exhaustion the first night.

But though Serbia has chanted her *De Profundis*, it is in the hope of a splendid resurrection : a resurrection that her Allies will endeavour to secure for her at any cost. And the Serbian character will help her in this great restitution. With the heroic example of their sick and suffering but truly soldier-King, the courage, military skill and single-hearted devotion to the Army of Prince Alexander, their splendid fighting spirit will never be extinguished.

For, amongst all the races oppressed by the Turk, the Serbs, the Montenegrins and the Magyars alone held their national heritage of manly valour. The Bulgar grovelled sullenly ; the Greek swindled ; the Armenian cringed ; but the Turks found in the mountains of Serbia their hardest foes and fighters. The fierce patriotism that burnt through these long centuries of past history has only been accentuated by the silent, heroic endurance of the *Via Dolorosa* they have had to tread before a relentless enemy.

BULGARIA.



VI.

A CITY OF INTRIGUE.

ENGLISHWOMEN travelling in the Balkans are still a not too frequent sight, and the people of these countries—with the exception of Turkey—display a great, though quite polite, interest in their appearance and doings.

We left Belgrade for Sophia very late one night, and while the luggage was being checked I sat enthroned on the dressing-bags in the waiting-room, my dress well tucked up off the dirty floor.

We were an absorbing centre of attraction to the peasants, who seem to do so much of their travelling by night, and who stood in a ring around us.

A fur rug, a "kaross" from South Africa, and my leather cushion were a terrible puzzle to them, and after much discussion as to the beast the rug was made of, and the use for the leather cushion, one brilliant fellow, a budding Coquelin, advanced, and gently stroking the fur, emitted a most feline "miaou!" He looked sadly disappointed, however, when we shook our heads while the ring greeted his efforts with roars of laughter! But his triumph was complete when, after feeling the cushion, he turned round to his friends and, laying his head sideways, emitted a portentous snore!

Just as we were getting into the train a very smart much uniformed official approached, and after saluting us, begged to offer his humble apologies for having detained us and examined our luggage so minutely at Belgrade on our arrival. He had not properly scrutinized the paper, was not aware of its importance, etc., etc.

A close observation revealed the fact that he was our tiresome interlocutor of the first evening, entirely altered

and transfigured by his fine feathers, and ready to make ample amends to us.

The railway journey between Belgrade and Sofia takes about thirteen hours, and we passed Tzarybrod—the customs—in the early hours of the morning. We had given our passports and diplomatic "laissez passer" to the conductor, so were not disturbed till breakfast-time.

By doing the journey at night we missed the first part of the wonderful but desolate scenery of the Nichava Valley, which lies close to the border of Bulgaria. Some consider this gorge finer than the Dragoman Pass, which lies near Sofia, and which we traversed about 7.30 a.m. Bulgaria here looks savage and wild; the bold crags rise cruelly one above another, their colouring, dull pink, brown and lavender, cutting a sharp outline against the cold blue sky above. Deep patches of snow were lying in the nooks behind the rocks where the sun could not penetrate, and sparse shrubs and wiry wind-bent trees struggled for a foothold on the barren, stony slopes. Below, a snow-fed torrent howled and foamed over the jagged boulders and splintered rocks. Beyond the Pass are more hills, less steep and rugged, and dry sandy stretches of land lying between them, on which the shepherd or humble tiller of the soil has built his simple home.

About nine o'clock a smiling, good-natured conductor informed us that a restaurant car had just been attached to the train, and we should be able to have breakfast. Good news! for we had hardly expected more than the prospect of swallowing a scalding cup of coffee and a roll, during a three minutes' interval at a station. A very decent breakfast we found could be procured, and we started with vigour upon omelette, ham, coffee and rolls: some brown little aniseed cakes only checking our ardour at the end. A stout German, with his stouter Frau, were our only companions in the car, and they lapped their coffee with a noisy chorus of satisfied grunts, only hushed at sight of the bill.

Our train climbed slowly past the snow-topped hills towards the big plain on which stands Sofia. The sun was bright, but the wind blew bitterly from the north. We stopped at a station crowded with country people going into market at Sofia, and snatching my camera, I jumped

out, fully prepared to stalk the quarry: but our German friend, vastly interested in "*Die Englische Dame*," and fully persuaded that his chunky person would be a decorative note in any picture, haunted me absurdly, and only a system of haughty detachment and reserve of manner defeated his purpose. A delightful small tot of five, almost obliterated beneath her massed wraps, most amiably posed—with one finger in her mouth, her father's hat topping her own bonnet, and a pudgy little hand clutching her dress, so as to reveal a sturdy pink and brown leg—and was made the proud possessor of a few "*stotinka*" for her condescension!

Her mother carried in her arms her other child, a three months old baby, done up in a tight parcel of quilted material, and only by untying the top flap of the parcel could we get a peep at the slumbering infant within. How it lived, breathed, and grew inside its packing cover was a problem that astonished us!

Punctually at twelve our train puffed into the station at Sofia, and we saw our friend, Colonel Du Cane, our military attaché, waiting for us on the platform. He had brought down his Bulgarian servant, Dimitri—of whom more anon—and with the Kavass from the British Agency, our luggage was soon mustered, and in a couple of open cabs drawn by wiry little ponies—almost buried beneath our luggage—off we started for the Hotel Bristol, Dimitri closely following in another.

It was curious to see the driver cross himself as he scrambled on to the box; a custom I found pretty general all over Bulgaria.

The station, like that at Athens, lies well outside the town, and there is a jolting, dusty drive through unattractive waste ground and untidy suburbs.

The Hôtel Bristol is new, clean, and managed by very obliging people, and its prices are quite moderate. Rooms had been engaged for us, and we found them very nice—clean bare floors, with charming Bulgarian rugs on them, simple polished wood furniture, comfortable-looking beds, on which reposed most gorgeous and brilliant orange satin eider-downs! W. G.'s face peeping out from amid its regal hue in the early morning hours looked very rakish, while my black locks must have presented quite an Eastern effect.

The bedclothes, however, proved a sad illusion, for they were all carefully buttoned on to the wonderful quilt, and the first night was one of frantic endeavour to keep under the tiresome thing. A breath seemed to dislodge it from one's foot, a sigh sent it chasing to the side, and a sneeze jerked it almost out of one's frenzied clasp to the floor. Two o'clock in the morning found me struggling feverishly with several dozen buttons, and preparing to make my bed in the homely tucked-in English way; but alas and alack! no homely good-sized English sheet met my efforts halfway, and its dimensions—only an inch or so bigger than the bed—obstinately refused to be tucked, and I sadly crept into bed again, hoping that sleep would soon envelop me, and that my toes would restrain their curiosity and not peep out on a cold, dark world.

The next morning after breakfast I returned to my room to find the place in a swamp, and two Bulgarian women giggling lustily, with their skirts tucked up, and helped by two men with pails and mops in swabbing the floor. They had apparently grasped my travelling bath of rubber in the only real and perfect way for depositing the contents on the floor instead of into the pail, and had done this in as complete a manner as it was possible to accomplish!

Several members of the Diplomatic Corps were living in the hotel, but taking their meals at the Union Club—an excellent little club, close to the hotel. The "Bristol," like the Grand Hotel in Belgrade, has no public reception rooms, so that if it rains, or a friend calls, one has to see them in one's bedroom. Sometimes there is a private sitting-room that can be engaged for an occasion, but it is very rare to find one ever unoccupied. The members of the Union Club include all the diplomats, State officials and Cabinet Ministers of Sofia. The food and service are good, and papers and the latest telegrams, as well as all the gossip of the town, are to be found here. There is a large dining-room where the members ordinarily dine at one long and several smaller tables. Two private dining-rooms and a large billiard and reading room complete the premises. It is managed on English lines: is always full, well patronized, and a great boon.

During our stay in Sofia Colonel Du Cane very kindly

made us his guests, and we had many a cheery little party there.

Our first day in Sofia was a bright spring one, with a sharp tang in the air from the surrounding snow-capped mountains. It was market-day—always an interesting sight in these foreign lands, and we sallied forth with a lot of small coin in our pockets, and, camera in hand, I was soon snapping right and left.

It was the gayest sight imaginable! Crowds of peasants in delightful costumes; the men, fine handsome fellows, in cream fustian strapped with stitched designs of brown and black and a red sash, their thick short sheepskin coats worn fur inside and with good stitchery in red and black as ornament. On their heads the "Kalpak"—a pot-shaped cap of black sheepskin or astrakhan—is worn, and their cloth leggings are bound with leather thongs.

The women wear an underskirt of linen and lace, a short overskirt of many colours, and prettily embroidered bodice with elaborate sleeves. They do their hair in multitudinous long plaits intertwined with necklaces of coins and beads, often of much value, while others are strung round their necks. The married women wear a kerchief on their heads.

I saw more pretty girls here than at Belgrade, and they seemed anything but dull; in fact they were having a mighty fine time coquetting and flirting with the town and country men alternately.

As soon as they discovered I was photographing them, difficulties arose. So anxious were they one and all to be included in the picture that they pressed and crowded round me till the "finder" showed nothing but a solid phalanx of humanity.

Tugs at my elbow and invitations—in the unknown tongue but still quite comprehensible—to take them proved unavailing, for as soon as I grouped them, the crowd filled up in a compact wall again.

They were vastly different from the spoilt American Indian, who evades all capture with the camera unless accompanied by a fifty cents or a dollar inducement.

The big market square was crammed with people and animals. Such an amusing, lively scene! Such chaffing and laughing that I longed to know what the jokes were. All kinds of vegetables, dried fruits, ponies, oxen, pigs and

poultry were being sold and bought. One picturesque old lady was holding an enormous live goose up by the legs. She must have had muscles of iron, for during the best part of an hour she held it in this position—poor *game*!

At the back, flanking the market-place, stands the old mosque of S. Sophia. The lower part of its walls were almost covered with delightful rugs, carpets and embroideries, which were hung up for inspection and sale. They made a very satisfactory bit of colour and background: warm reds and browns, deep soft purples and gold, shading gently into the faded yellow-toned wash of the walls. These rugs are made in Bulgaria, and are quite charming—colour and design being in many instances very artistic and the price very low.

In 1878, when Bulgaria was freed from the rule of the Turk—which for centuries had held the country in its corrupt grasp and slow-corroding effects of sloth and indigence—her first effort was directed to obliterating as quickly as possible all evidence of the hated usurper. The Turkish population "folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away." Their day over, they drifted off to other parts still under the sway of the Crescent, leaving but a remnant behind. Their mosques were demolished to make room for modern buildings or were converted into prisons and bath-houses. Now not more than 2,000 Turks are to be found in Sofia, and they have but one place of worship.

S. Sophia dates from the twelfth century, and is a huge solidly built edifice of Byzantine architecture. Its walls, wonderfully thick—in many places having a depth of eight feet—are slowly crumbling away; the whitewash and plaster are peeling off in great seams, showing dim evidence of the early Christian faith beneath the Moslem covering of a later age.

Time, weather and decay have revealed in the slowly diminishing walls secret cavities or chambers in which tradition says skeletons have been found, walled into their chambers of death. The Christian pulpit still looks towards Jerusalem, while close beside it the one from which the Moslem Faith is proclaimed faces its Holy of Holies, Mecca, in a line that seems all askew. All was dark, damp

and desolate within, and we emerged into the light and bustle of the market-place with a breath of relief.

One realized here that this was the heart of the Balkans. Stalwart Bulgarian officers in Russian-looking uniforms may be seen everywhere. Country people of many types and costumes from the different districts jostled each other in the busy streets. The children, little podgy things enveloped in a queer assortment of clothing—for the wind blew keenly off the snowy hills—were scrambling and larking round the old Mosque and playing "tag" in and under the stalls or round the groups of haggling vendors. Queer, long, wooden carts, drawn by strong slow-paced oxen, creaked and rumbled along the crowded roadway, while the bright April sunshine tried to woo some of the bleakness out of the sharp bustling wind.

Behind the market-place lies the silversmiths' quarter, a very picturesque but squalid alley, where, in little platforms all window and just a foot out of the mire, squat the workers in metal and filigree. Holy lamps, coins, amulets, belts and buckles for the country folk remind one of the East—while the immense display of arms in the shop windows shows the fighting propensities of its people.

We bought several photographs and post-cards from a man who had been carried off by brigands while travelling in the country. Brigandage still exists in the far-outlying country districts, and especially towards the Macedonian border, but in more civilized Bulgaria the Government are doing their best to stamp it out.

Less than thirty years ago Sofia was a squalid, straggling town under the despotic rule of the Turk. Now it is a city of over 70,000 inhabitants, and nothing has been spared in laying out its streets and broad boulevards and in the erection of its fine public buildings to make it a capital Bulgaria may well be proud of. The Pirotska Ulitza, the Maria Luisa Ulitza, and the Don Dukoff Boulevard are the best streets, and here one finds shop windows that show *les modes de Paris*, though in rather a bourgeois fashion; photograph and post-card shops, displaying the latest pictures of the variety actresses or singers from Vienna or Paris, stand cheek by jowl with a money-changer, an olive-skinned Spanish Jew, whose keen eye and arched nose one sees behind the little glass show-case of various coins,

amulets, earrings, etc., while on the footwalk, giving a delightfully characteristic touch of the East to it all, itinerant vendors and pedlars of all descriptions ply their trade. Crowds of peasants fill the busy streets in the morning: swartzy Jews, "hamals," or Turkish porters, with ropes around their shoulders, and carrying the wooden hump-like support on which they rest their burden; and picturesque boat-lads, with their brightly-polished black and brass boat-cot, eye the strangers with smiling interest.

By the afternoon much of this interesting crowd has disappeared, and the officials and bourgeois appear, to take the air.

Several of the streets are planted with trees, which in a few years' time will give this hot but windy city of the plains shelter and shade in summer. The shops are numerous, and most of one's more modest requirements can be obtained from them.

French or German is generally understood and spoken a little, though I had an amusing experience one morning when trying to match some grey silk to darn my stockings. In the first shop I entered I found no one who spoke French, and so a boy was hurriedly dispatched to fetch a young lady from another shop who did. The silk was unobtainable there, so I wandered on to another shop, and again I waited while a messenger was sent for an interpreter, and, to my amusement, it was the same young lady who again came to my help. I laughingly told her that I thought I had better retain her services until I had found what I wanted, and she accordingly most obligingly accompanied me to a third shop, where I eventually secured my silk. She was a pretty woman of twenty-eight or so, and had learned her French in Paris, where she had been seven years in service, but at the expense of her health, and she had been obliged to return to the splendid air of her native city. And the air at Sofia is indeed magnificent and most vitalizing, while the position of the town, if not so beautiful as Belgrade, is still fine.

Standing on a broad plain, and seen from the outskirts, the city looks like an overgrown village. From the centre the public buildings quickly taper down to the low, flat-roofed houses that struggle irregularly into the great sandy-looking plateau that is rimmed by the hills. A short drive

takes one quickly from the heart of the city on to the grass-covered plain, with its many outlying farmsteads and scanty groups of trees. Telegraph poles stretch in long line ahead, and dusty roads wind across to the hilly country beyond. Buffalo and ox-drawn carts creak and grate along in the dust; peasants with their flocks of black and white sheep or geese stare solemnly at us, and a thirsty fellow, tipping out of a round wooden bottle—the size and shape of a plate, which he hangs round his neck with a sly smile—passes us on the road. Looking north, the distant Balkan chain stretches as far as the eye can see, while to the south stands grand old Mount Vitosch, on whose rocky slopes many a bear and wolf have their lair.

The last few years have seen enormous changes in the aspect of the town. Numbers of poor, wretched-looking dwellings, relics of the Turks, have been demolished, and fine modern residences have completely altered the aspect of Stredetz, as the Turks called the capital of Bulgaria.

Indeed, money seems to have been freely spent, and the usually close-fisted Bulgarian has been opening his purse-strings to some purpose. Many of their private houses are of good appearance, built of stone and enclosed in their own grounds, while an occasional low, demure-looking old Turkish house, modestly retiring behind its shrubs and shutters, is still to be seen among these modern upstarts. Their public buildings and government offices are big and handsome and vie with those of other capitals.

Few of the houses recently built by the upper classes have gardens in our sense of the word. They stand certainly in a garden space wherein a tree or two and some shrubs will be endeavouring to maintain a somewhat starved and precarious existence, but, except in the Palace grounds, the cult of gardening as an art can hardly be stated to exist; and, as in the furnishing of their houses, their æsthetic sense is still quite undeveloped. The climate, of course, is very trying; the winter is long and severe, while the summer is very hot and windy, dust-storms often sweeping the city from end to end.

Some efforts at a park have been made, however, and in the centre of the town are the public gardens, which have proved such a boon to the townspeople and children. On the entrance-gates we saw a ghastly notice pasted up rela-

ting to the murder of the late M. Petkoff, one of Bulgaria's ablest ministers. Like Stambuloff, he was cruelly assassinated, and this gruesome poster pictured him lying, after death, arms folded across the breasts. Poor Stambuloff had both his hands cut off and his face mercilessly hacked, and the picture, taken from a photograph, had cruelly depicted each wound.*

A well-known diplomat who was secretary to his Legation at Sofia at the time gave me the following description of the funeral, which he attended: "Just before starting it was discovered that the police had secretly unscrewed the wheels of the horse that was to carry the martyred statesman to his grave, with the idea of upsetting the coffin *en route*. This was remedied in time to prevent such a scandalous disaster, but during the procession and even round the grave a demonstration organized by the police was indulged in against the mourners to the accompaniment of blows and general disturbance in the true Bulgarian manner. Madame Stambuloff, who was educated at Dresden, had shown the self-control and bravery of a man during these terrible days and now gave no sign of fear. I, with others, was thrown to the ground, and blows with sticks and umbrellas were rained upon the aged Madame Zankoff and Madame Danitch, the wife of the Serbian Minister, who fell to the ground on top of me. This demonstration and rough usage was intentional and aimed directly against the Diplomatic Corps, who were for the most part in favour of Stambuloff."

Indeed political intrigue is as the very breath of their nostrils to the inhabitants of Sofia, from the King and his Ministers down to the frequenters of the humblest little cafes in the slums, where plots, murders and bomb outrages may be hatched. Naturally a class of politicians takes a

* "On the evening of July 15th, 1898, as Stambuloff was driving home from the Union Club with an old friend, three men leaped into the street with yataghans and a revolver in their hands. Before the Premier's old servant had had time to flee, the assassins had cut his master down, and were hacking his prostrate body with their knives as it lay on the roadway. At the first shot the murderers fled, and the police who were present made no attempt to arrest them. Their unfortunate victim was taken home to die. Death came as a relief, for both his arms had been cut to pieces, one eye had been ball gouged out, and his forehead bore the marks of fifteen wounds. Three days later, the glories of Bulgaria's war had breathed his last."—"Story of the Nations," by W. Miller.

conspicuous position in this state of affairs, and flourishes like the proverbial green bay-tree in the general atmosphere.

King Ferdinand's Palace is unostentatious, and stands in gardens with solidly built entrance-gates that are always guarded by the waiting sentries. The Sobranje, or Houses of Parliament, the new Agricultural Bank—a most excellent institution—the fine theatre and opera-house, with its annexe recently erected for the storage of dresses and scenery, the Alexander Nevsky church, built by national subscription, and the beautiful monument to the Tzar Liberator show in no uncertain fashion the growth and development of the city.

King Ferdinand has scientific tastes and has always shown a particular predilection for the kindred pursuits of botany and ornithology, and his knowledge of these favourite studies is wide. In the gardens round his palace he has countless varieties of interesting plants and shrubs, and a very inclusive and uncommon Alpine garden, most charmingly arranged, is an original feature.

One of the most interesting things we saw in Sofia was the excellent collection of animals and birds that he has formed in grounds adjoining the Palace and which he daily visits. It is one of the best and most beautifully kept little zoological gardens I have ever seen. A by no means extensive yet very carefully thought-out collection has been arranged. The birds are especially numerous, and seem to be his favourite study, and the size and appointments of their cages, as well as their fine plumage and healthy appearance, are warmly to be commended.

The King has made some interesting experiments in crossing the golden and other pheasants, and has several pens of the cross, numbers being sent down to "Rhodope," his country place, for the shooting-parties given there in the autumn.

A splendid pair of wolves from the neighbouring mountains haunts me even now with the memory of their savage snarls and furious dashes of growling passion at the slightest movement upon our part as we watched them. Well for us that the cage was strong, with these wild devils within! Splendidly built, lean and lissome, these fierce savages from the distant hills and forests paced restlessly to and fro, lips drawn back, showing the cruel canine fangs, whilst the snarl-

ing thunder rose and fell unceasingly, and the vigilant, cunning eyes looked ever beyond us, watching, waiting.

One of our surprises was a visit to the Commercial and Industrial Museum, where we found a delightful collection. Products from the various districts and specimens of all the things they can manufacture in the country were here—hats, embroideries, rugs, blankets, pottery, woven tissues and fine gauzes, some nice old filigree jewellery and embroidered squares, and we made many purchases.

From the social point of view Sofia is gayer than Belgrade. A certain amount of entertaining goes on in the diplomatic circle, and we went to some informal, pleasant little parties. Picnics, riding-parties and lawn-tennis in the summer, and bridge and hockey in the winter form excellent diversions.

Away to the west and on the extreme limit of the town lies the Ghetto or Jewish quarter. The Jews here are divided into two classes, the "Spanioles," descendants of the Spanish refugees, and the "Poles," who include a polyglot mixture of Austrian, Russian, Polish and German people. These two classes keep quite apart, and even in their faith have separate Rabbis, the *Spaniole* and the *Poli*. The former live in a comfortable, clean quarter of the town and are prosperous and respectable citizens, making their living as merchants, money-changers, and shopkeepers. Their language is a corrupt Spanish. The "Poles," on the other hand, are of a very different type: dirty, ignorant, poor; they ply as hawkers and "old clo'" dealers, and speak a confused Yiddish jargon. As in England, they suffer no persecution and are permitted to lead their lives unmolested.

Not far from this quarter is situated the excellent little Institution built and maintained by Mr. O'Mahoney, an Irish gentleman from Co. Wicklow, for the relief of destitute Macedonian boys. It is a generous and philanthropical work that he has undertaken, and he deserves every credit. Hearing piteous accounts of the terrible massacres and cruelty practised on the poor Macedonians and the destitute condition of children whose parents had been killed, he organized and established this school and home for orphan boys in Sofia. The good work has progressed well, and in a house on the outskirts of the town about twenty-five or thirty boys are housed, fed, clothed and educated. The boys are taken

about the age of five or six, and as soon as their education is completed, situations are found for them in business or a profession.

Some ghastly stories were told us by Mr. O'Mahoney of the terrible sufferings and crimes these boys had witnessed, and how in many cases had themselves been the victims. One little lad was caught by some soldiers while guarding his sheep, and being unable to give them the information they wanted, had his skull smashed and his throat cut from ear to ear. They roughly buried him to hide the traces of their brutal crime. Shortly afterwards a shepherd and his dog were attracted to the spot by some moans and dug him out, to find him still alive. Careful nursing saved his life, and he is now an inmate of the Home.

Another boy saw his parents crucified to the walls of their cottage and the place then set on fire and burnt to the ground.

That such ghastly crimes can be accomplished and go unpunished seems impossible, but it is, unhappily, too true, and poor Macedonia still remains the bull-ring of South-Eastern Europe.*

* Human nature has not sensibly altered with the lapse of time, and deeds of unimaginable horror and cruelty are being perpetrated to-day in Serbia and Macedonia by the Bulgar.

VII.

A MEDIEVAL CITY AND A MONASTERY.

THERE is always something rather exhilarating about dipping into the interior of a not-too-well-known country, and especially one where brigands are known to exist, for the chance prospect of adventures and peeps at native life lay one up to pleasurable anticipation.

We had heard much about the interest and beauty of **Turnova**, the ancient capital of the Bulgarian Tzars lying near the Rhodope Range, and at the head of the Yantra Gorge in northern Bulgaria, situated in a position of wonderful natural strength and strategic importance and dominating several of the important passes of the Balkan range; also a visit to one of the fortified old monasteries *en route* seemed to afford us the prospect of a real glimpse of native Bulgarian life, which in these remote districts is almost medieval in its aspects.

By starting in the evening, we passed our first night in the train instead of at one of the country inns or "hans," for rumours of rats, and restless nights spent in the company of unwelcome entomological visitors, made us loth to tempt the hospitality of the country inns more than was necessary. Colonel Du Cane was our escort into the wilds, and his lieutenant was the invaluable Dimitri. Truth, however, compels me to admit that our berths in the train would have run no unworthy second to anything the inns could have offered, and a restless night and well-warranted murder committed in the early hours of the morning made us willing risers when Dimitri called us at five.

It was a chilly, grey, windy morning, with leaden skies hanging low over the flat plains, when we scrambled out at Gornia-Orlovitza, the station where we hoped to find breakfast and the carriages waiting to take us up the

great valley and gorge of the Yantra, beyond which lay Timova.

Even at the early hour of six o'clock, the coffee-room at the station was open and filled with peasants, for the people of the Balkans seem to patronize the great iron road; of so recent a development, as much as do the people of Japan.

But here the likeness ends, and a vast difference between the two peoples is discovered when you are boxed up in the waiting-room of a country station with the former. The odour of the "great unwashed," perfumed liberally with garlic, hangs heavily in the air, and one shrinks back as far as possible from the men in their big sheepskin coats, that are a haven and home for happy families of every description of torture.

I have waited over an hour for a train in a wayside station in Japan on a drenching day, where the waiting-room contained at least fifty Japanese country-folk, and though the air was hot and steamy—for it was June, and the tropical rains were on—still it was clean air. The Japanese would as soon think of going without his dinner as missing his daily bath.

Feeling cold, and not at all enterprising, we sat in the little waiting-room round a tiny fire until bread, Turkish coffee and tumblers of boiled milk were brought to us for breakfast, and soon afterwards we were ready to board our carriages.

"Carriages," I called them, did I? But "trap" or "machine"—as they say in Scotland—might have answered better, for both these words suggest the implied danger which often exists: and certainly we looked apprehensively at the strange, rickety, old vehicles, and wondered if they would ever carry us through the day.

Our Jehu, a fat, jolly dumpling of a Turk, in red turban and faded blue shirt patched with many colours, like a Joseph's coat, was busy putting a dubiously white sheet over the once imperial-looking scarlet velvet cushions. This was to hide their deficiencies, for they had burst and cracked in all directions, and the stuffing was protruding freely. Springs were a "might-have-been," and liberal use had been made of bits of string, in tying together sundry bits of the harness and even the "trap" itself.

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Our first consideration was to try and find how we could pack ourselves and our things into the weird vehicles, and to come to a satisfactory arrangement with the "grip-sacks" regarding the disposal of our limbs and the basket of little luxuries, consisting of butter, jam, biscuits and tea, which we had brought with us into the wilds. It was a tricky problem, but thinking we had mastered it, with a loud cracking of whips off we started. Dimitri, hanging on like a fly to about six inches of insecure box-seat, was beside the fat Turk, who bulged over the remainder. Both their legs, on a level with their chins, were resting on the sack of hay for three rather small horses.

The wind was bitterly cold, and we were glad of all our wraps, as well as the horse-blankets which Jehu with a fatherly air wrapped round our knees. We struck across the plain towards the far-lying hills, but for the first mile or two there was no road, and we bobbed about in the trap like a couple of pills in a box, being hit in divers tender parts of our anatomy by the various bits of luggage, in a rude and particularly irritating manner. Legs as well as hands had to come to the rescue, in keeping the violent things in their place: the cotton bits of string seemed useless, and twice the bags were suddenly shot out with a resounding whack on to the ground, which boded ill for breakable contents, and made one murmur things that rhymed with lamb below one's breath!

Striking a rough road at last, the going gradually became better, or else we got more used to the shaking, and we clattered through hamlets and villages awake and busy at 6.30 a.m. As we approached the hills, the sky began to clear, and soft light clouds and hints of blue began to break up the dull grey roof overhead.

Our ponies, poor thin scraggy beasts, were better than they looked and went well. Too well sometimes, for we went down some hills at a break-neck pace, and it was all we could do to keep ourselves and the "grip-sacks" in the carriage.

We had left the plain far behind, and were now steadily climbing into the gorge of the Yantra. Rugged cliffs frowned above us, their lower slopes clothed with wood and thicket. Half-way up the valley and at one of the tortuous turns of the road two fine old monasteries came into view.

Both were splendidly situated—perched high up on the crags above us.

To the right, sheltering beneath a wall of rock, stood the "Preobajensky" or "Transfiguration," the one at which we were going to stay. Opposite, on the other side of the gorge and river, and buttressed on to the hill-side, was that of the "Holy Trinity." The "Preobajensky" is the larger and richer of the two.

Nothing could be finer than the positions of those weather-beaten old sanctuaries. Like big fortresses they stood out, rugged and serene, defying disaster and foe alike in their almost inaccessible solitude. The wild clamour of war and tempest had passed them by untouched; brother after brother had been laid to rest on the steep hill-side, but the years that rolled only added a softer, tenderer touch to the grim austerity of their grey walls.

The one on the right, the "Preobajensky," was our destination, and here we hoped to get a rest and some more solid food than our light breakfast of boiled milk and coffee had afforded us.

We turned a road at sharp angles to the one we were on, and at the corner of which stood a rough granite cross, presumably marking the way to the monastery. The ascent was very bad, and I wondered whether the granite cross at the roadside did not mark, as it does in Norway, the disastrous spot where the victims of the wildly careering cariole had met their death. For there too the rough and ready driver-boy ties up his battered perambulator with string, old boot or corset lace, and trusts to chance to pull all safely through.

We climbed and staggered up what looked like the bed of a mountain torrent, the men and Jehu on foot—I trying with a monkey-like dexterity what feet and hands would do to keep the luggage and myself in the vehicle.

Half-way up, and just when the side of the road sheered abruptly down an eighty-foot drop to a wood, the ponies jibbed, exhausted. Jehu, in a state of frantic excitement, screamed out a string of curses, shouts and maledictions, hanging vainly on to their heads, his fat back tobogganing down in the dust after the ponies. I clambered out, as one wheel went over the ridge, and dashed for a stone just in time to prevent the whole thing following. It was a close

chance, and looking over the edge at the drop we should have taken, I decided to do the rest of that climb on foot!

Another mile brought us to the gateway of the old monastery, and here, outside the gates, on the flat ledge dug out from the mountain-side, a clumsy little market was proceeding. It was the very tiniest market-place imaginable, for the ledge was only about thirty or forty feet square, but every inch of ground had been utilized, and it was extraordinary to see how varied an assortment of goods each salesman and his wife had managed to arrange on a four foot bit of ground. Cottons, calicoes, toys, beads, pictures, as well as the more practical eggs and poultry, were all for sale.

The women, stout and muscular, were clad in thick, dark, homespun skirts, reaching to their knees. Their sturdy legs were encased in rough cream woollen stockings; heavy sabot-shaped shoes of coarse leather, with the toes tipped upward, made a fine musical *kip-kip* on the cobbled ground. Their heads were enveloped in closely wound dark woollen shawls which framed their broad homely faces, and a padded, close-fitting short coat completed a very serviceable working dress. Their only vanity was a bright cotton scarf, which peeped out from the front of their bosom. The men were dressed in the same colour, and wore cloth breeches to the knee, the tall cap of fur and leather thongs laced round their stockings being the only difference in style. They wore big fierce moustaches, in fact we rarely saw a beard among the country-folk, while whiskers, or "check warmers," which are so popular in Hungary, are not the fashion here!

Our arrival on the scene created a great stir, and business was suspended while they crowded round us, having the stare of their lives! Few strangers had ever been here, and they weren't going to miss such a golden opportunity. My big fur coat, which falls to my heels and is a dear possession, provoked much admiration, and many hands were stretched out surreptitiously to feel it! Earrings, wrist watch, etc., were fingered with admiring remarks, and when one of us laughed and displayed the gold filling in a tooth, there was great excitement, and Dimitri was bombarded with questions as to whether it was the English custom to carry one's wealth in one's teeth. Dimitri, very embarrassed, didn't know, and did not like to say anything, but their naive and friendly curiosity had to be satisfied, and when questioned

as to their eager interest, he had to own up, and we laughingly told them that it was not all we possessed, and that it was only a dental artifice. "The Gospodari must be very rich indeed to mend their teeth with gold," they remarked.

It brought to my mind the amusing story of a fellow-countryman, a canny Scot, who did not waste gold on his teeth. After a bad bout of toothache McNab determined to have it out, and went to the dentist. Just before taking the gas he began counting his money. "Oh!" said the dentist, "you needn't pay me till it's all done." "Na, na, my mannie," said McNab, "I ken that, but I was only counting my siller before I had the gas!"

Bidding our cheery market friends good-day, we were presented with little bunches of wood violets, and thanked for our purchases of native embroidery and a bright sash or two.

We passed through the massive arched gateway, with its stout doors six inches thick and crossed with strong iron bars for protection in times of trouble, for it is true that in the Middle Ages many a monk wore the coat of mail beneath his habit, and the old walls have echoed battle-cries as often as chants of the church. This valley must have seen terrible scenes of slaughter, and these monasteries were used as fortresses up until quite recent years. Even now in war time the old women and children flock there for safety.

Just inside is the big square courtyard round which the monastery is built and in the centre of which stands the chapel. It was the quaintest, most picturesque place imaginable, and looked like a miniature enclosed and fortified village. Built at any level that the nature of the steep hill-side allowed, nothing was uniform, and this added much to the charming effect of the whole. Above, towered the mountain-side, a solid overhanging wall of rock. The outer walls of the monastery were like the bastions of a fortress, and the windows were few and very small; those in the inner courtyard—at all angles and heights—were many and of good size, big shelving eaves overhung them, to prevent the deep snows of winter lying too heavily and too long. Under some of them were little wooden platforms supported by poles, where the brothers could emerge from their rooms and sit and work.

Inside the gate a narrow way ran up steeply to the square

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where stood the chapel, behind which was sheltered the deep well, which in times of siege kept life in the place.

As we came in, the bell over the gateway sounded, and several of the brothers came out to welcome us, with whom we shook hands warmly. They were big, bearded fellows, with dark eyes and hair and smiling broad faces. They conducted us up to the wing of the building reserved for guests, in the centre of which a big bare platform was open to the whole court, flanked by the rooms on either side.

A square room with window and broad-ledged seat was at the further end, which was, I was told, the only large window on the outer walls, and had only been made the last few years. A few chairs, a stove in the corner, giving out a welcome glow, and a table in the centre comprised the furniture. This last was covered with a gaudy red and yellow cover, a twin to one I had seen in the little market-place a few minutes before.

There were none of the simple comforts, such as a rug, lamp, and simple writing-table that I met with in staying at the monasteries in remote Spanish mountain passes. This was extremely primitive and clean, but the bearded Superior made up for the bare simplicity by his smiling welcome.

This Bulgarian "igoumène" or Abbot, owing no spiritual allegiance to the Head of the Roman Church, did not appreciate the story of my interview with Pope Pius as much as the more cultured Spanish Abbot had done.

It was at the close of a very interesting private audience of His Holiness that I begged him to sign the photograph I had been honoured with. While putting on his glasses to grant my request they slipped and fell to the ground. We both bent forward at the same moment to pick them up, with the result that our heads came together with a little bump! His Holiness, with that kindly smile so many remember, remarked whimsically, "*Due teste valgono più che una sola*" (Two heads are better than one) as I handed him back his glasses. Within a short time His Holiness's bow was all over Rome.

The Bulgarian Abbot laughed at my little anecdote, but the Spaniard not only delighted in the quick wit, but plied me with many questions as to my impressions of that kindly, broad-minded and saintly character.

Two of the brothers escorted us along the passage to the

bedrooms where we were to sleep, and we were really thankful, after our restless night, early rising and long drive in the wind, to tidy up and repair the ravages to *coiffure* and person. Our little windows gave us a perfectly glorious view down the steep wooded pass to the plains beyond ; below us the cliff dropped eight hundred feet to the thin silver line of road and whirling torrent.

The walls of the room were whitewashed, and on them were hung cheap prints of Tzar Ferdinand and his sad-looking wife, Marie Louise of Parma, who died some years ago, also some gaudy oleographs of holy subjects. A big divan with immense cushions covered with crochet antimacassars did duty as a bed.

A knock at the door, and one of the young brothers appeared, bringing us some water in a small tin. Thanking him, we turned round to look for the washstand. On a chair in the corner stood a baby jug and basin ! Really the latter was not bigger than a good-sized soap-dish, and seeing it we were not surprised at the tiny pan of water brought us and which was not much bigger than a breakfast cup. It was better than nothing, however, and though it could only be called "a lick and a promise," it freshened us up considerably, and in conjunction with the resources of our aforesaid "grip-sacks" worked a decided improvement on our comfort and appearance. We emerged to find lunch being set out on the big platform, and Dimitri, helped by some of the young lay-brothers, busy unpacking the things we had brought with us—the brothers providing hot water and boiled eggs, etc.

They were fat, jolly fellows, and we beamed at them and they beamed at us, and Dimitri added to his other labours by being interpreter-in-chief for all the pretty things we said to each other.

We spent the afternoon visiting the chapel and the cells, bare and homely, but the hay-stuffed bed did not look uncomfortable, and the stove showed they knew how to keep themselves warm.

The chapel, which occupied the centre of the square, was most ornate, and the walls of the interior had been completely covered by frescoes, queer, ill-painted things of fearful anatomy, but which in the dim light had a rich effect of warmth and colour and must have been objects of

devotion and reverence to many of the simple country-folk who worship there.

But the outer walls held the masterpieces of art! and we gasped at the primitive and lurid representations that were depicted here with such force and ingenuity. The tortures of the damned! The lake of fire boiling over agonized forms! All the cruelties of the Middle Ages were depicted with terrible reality. The writhing and coiling of serpents round bodies thrown from what looked like a billiard table but which was meant to be the earth! Endless fancies of a distorted religion were here, each one more sensational and diabolical than the last. It seemed impossible that these kindly, beaming brothers could teach a creed so gruesome or believe in a future so awful. The community number about forty and lead a simple, contented life. They were a strong, healthy-looking lot of men with their full beards and broad shoulders, and were dressed alike in long black cassocks and the high black hat of the Bulgarian priest or pop. Most of them wear their hair long.

One of the lay brothers who waited upon us—a great contrast to the others—was a delicate, Italian-looking, oval-faced youth who might have stepped out of one of Raphael's canvases. His hair lay smoothly on the skull, and as it approached the pale, beardless face and slender neck waved out into a full aureole of crisp curls—while the tight black jerkin, with sleeves coming well over the hands, completed the illusion.

Dusk fell soon and drove us indoors, where, after simple early supper, with tea made in a steaming samovar, we retired to rest on the divans, on which coarse but clean linen sheets and red blankets were laid. We slept until 7.30 the next morning, when Dimitri appeared with a tin basin and a fair-sized saucepan of hot water, followed by the Raphael-esque youth carrying nothing, but most anxious to gain a little more information as to the requirements and eccentricities of the first English people he had ever seen.

After breakfast—our third meal of eggs and tea—we started saying good-bye to the Superior and the brothers who had looked after us so kindly. A small sum of money for our board, accompanied by little gifts of knives, pencils and pocket-books, made them very happy.

As we left, they all came out and stood, a sombre but

smiling mass in their black cylinder hats and gowns, against the sunlit frescoes of their chapel wall. We bade them a cordial good-bye, and started walking down the worst bit of the road, John following me with reproachful eyes and many pressing invitations to go by the carriage, assuring me nothing could happen, but I was obstinate and stuck to my feet and safety till the worst of that bad road was over.

Half-way down the hill we stopped to look at some peasants' dwellings. The cottages were those of the poorer people and were very primitive. We saw one in course of construction which would have given points for flimsiness of structure to the jerry-builder of Clapham. The size of the proposed house is marked out by upright poles, and between these a slight basket-work of osier is formed which is thickly plastered on both sides with a mixture of clay, chopped straw and cattle dung. The roofs are thatched, and when finished the walls are whitewashed. Against one of the outer walls are built the two big ovens, one for baking and the other for boiling the preserves of prunes they are so fond of. The floors of the two living-rooms are made either of earth beaten hard, or of slabs of stone, and are covered with home-made rugs or skins. The family table at which they congregate is very low, and in the poorer cottages they either sit on the floor or on low stools when eating.

The women are indefatigable at spinning, and are to be seen with their distaffs herding the geese or pigs, on the hills with the sheep, or on the roads trudging beside the primitive wooden carts drawn by the big-horned oxen, who have their forelocks dyed a bright orange yellow to ward off the evil eye.

Their furniture is meagre, the bed generally a rough divan and hay-stuffed cushion: the spinning-wheel and the loom on which the good wife weaves the linen and wool to clothe her family hold the place of honour and seem to comprise most of the furniture; but even in the poorest dwelling a bright copper cooking-pan or two will be seen to gleam from the shelves, for the Bulgarians are quite as proud of their *batterie de cuisine* as the French and Austrians are.

The houses of the farmers and more well-to-do peasants are built of stone and look substantial and not uncomfort-

able. Every house has its watch-dog, generally a big fierce sheep-dog, of a different breed to those one sees in the Pyrenees, but his like in courage and ferocity.

The Bulgarians are a frugal, hard-working, sober race, and in this they much resemble their neighbours, the Turks. Their fare is of the simplest; meat is only eaten on festival days, and their ordinary diet consists of porridge made of maize, rye-bread, beans and other vegetables, soup, eggs, and sometimes a home-made wine called "Raki," also the famous "Yoghourt," or sour milk, so well known by Professor Metchnikoff's theory of the sturdy health and long life it brings. In fact, to many people, this is the only thing they know about Bulgaria, reminding one of the old joke, "Brazil? Oh! that's where the nuts come from, isn't it?" Certainly one sees a sturdy, muscular race thriving on "Yoghourt," and very old people of 114 and 116 are not uncommon in the country districts.

They grow quite a number of vegetables—the homely and indispensable potato, carrot and turnip, gourds, egg-plants, melons and paprika, or red pepper, of which they are very fond. One sees strings of these large pods hung up to dry outside the cottage doors just as the "haddies" are hung up to be sun-dried and baked on the walls of the crofts in Scotland. They cook it in a variety of ways—boiled, baked, pickled or stuffed—and its sharp, hot flavour is not unpleasant.

The women work in the fields and farm nearly as hard as the men, and a girl's marriage will often be postponed for years by the selfish desire of her parents not to lose her services.

In the case of marriage the would-be Benedict has to pay quite a good sum of money to the father of the bride before he can secure her as wife, the amount ranging from £20 to £200 according to the ability or position of his bride, while her parents provide her with her trousseau.

Except for some pretty girls we saw round Sofia, the Bulgarian woman is no beauty. They have honest, broad faces, shrewd eyes and a stolid expression. Into their harsh brown hair they put bright red or yellow artificial roses, or twine a string of coins, which often represents their dowry. Their figures are heavy and rather humpish, but they look sturdy workers, and are mothers of big stalwart sons.

The men are veritable sons of the soil, living on and for it. Independent and virile, they are good labourers, and numbers of them cross into Hungary and Roumania and do the menial work which the people there affect to despise.

Their great festivity is the Hora, the national dance, which was introduced from Greece, where it is called the Chora. The girls and men link hands in a circle, and dance to the shrill music of the bagpipes, played by men who stand within the circle. They are intensely fond of this and will dance for hours at a stretch, in a meadow or barn, and it seemed to be the one amusement in a life of much toil and drudgery.

Another amusement is for a man to dress up as a bear. He is chased by the girls, whom he seeks to elude or trip up. It is a wild, romping game, accompanied by shrieks of laughter and much smacking and punching from the girls, while the man-bear cuts grotesque capers, and makes most weird growls and grunting sounds. It is really a schoolboy's scramble, but they enjoy it immensely and it is screamingly funny to watch.

They are superstitious, believe in evil spirits and witchcraft, and have many queer customs and beliefs. The month of March is especially dedicated to women, and is called *Baba Mari*, or "Mother March." Advantage is taken of it by the women to have a real rest and be as idle as they like, in fact it is believed that if the ordinary duties of washing, weaving and spinning are performed, bad luck and a poor harvest are sure to result; and, indeed, it is a merciful and wise custom that gives these hard-working mothers and wives a little rest once in the year. The 25th of March is the day the festival is held in honour of the great Mother who renews the earth every year, and on this day no labour is permitted to mar the celebration of the re-birth of Nature.

Their folk-lore, which has only in recent years been compiled and collected, comes to them through the centuries, dictated perhaps by the imperfect medium of oral tradition, but nevertheless full of a certain pathos and interest. They sing of the theme of youth, of the longing of the man for the maid, and, to the Bulgarian idea, the inevitable death to romance in the prosaic round of married existence. For their wedded life is hard and unlovely in its toil and poverty, and the woman, no longer the maid to be won,

sinks out of the realm of poetry, her charm and attraction gone. As a widow, her desolate fate appeals to them, and in the following lines translated by Pencho Slaveikoff, the Bulgarian poet, their compassion is demonstrated :

" O pray to God, my wife,
 ? leave you not a widow—
 For know you what the widow's life will be ?
 You will be as the cuckoo desolate,
 That not another bird will greet or hail,
 But always look upon most sadly."

Some of the most popular are the " Haiduck," or hero songs, in the singing of which the monotonous life of drudgery is forgotten in the recital of the valorous doings of the past.

Slaveikoff has also translated some of their proverbs, which are full of a quaint wit and shrewd humour.

" The house is unhappy where the hen crows "

applies to all countries, except perhaps America.

" If a fox has a tooth left he won't be pious,"
 " An idle man makes a good prophet,"

and

" The clergyman's son is the devil's grandson "

seems to reflect too severely on an occasional prodigal ! Others, such as :

" Only the nightingale can understand the rose,"

and

" Youth has no boundaries : age has the grave "

show distinct beauty of thought.*

They have, however, little of the poetry or wealth of diction that exists in Serbia and Roumania, for their nature is not a poetic or imaginative one. But they have legends which are interesting and quaint, and this one struck me as being particularly so.

* These, with some of the Bulgarian proverbs at the beginning of this book, are from " The Shade of the Balkan," by H. Bernard, P. Slaveikoff, and E. J. Dillon.

LEGEND OF SATAN.

In the beginning God and Satan lived together. There was no world, only water. Then God said, "Let us create Earth and Man," to which Satan agreed, but said, "Where shall we find the Earth?" "Plunge into the Sea," said God, "and say, 'By the might of God,' and you will find Earth at the bottom." And Satan dived three times, but would not repeat the formula, so he found no Earth. The fourth time, having said it, he found it, and God cast it forth, and it formed the world. When Satan saw the world he was jealous, and he thought if he could drown God he would be acclaimed the Creator of the Earth. God read his thoughts and, pretending to fall asleep, gave him his opportunity. Satan gathered Him on to his shoulders and tried to drop Him into the Sea, but wherever he flew the water receded and the Earth increased. So Satan decided to awake God and tell Him that the Earth had grown and should be blessed. "It has been done," said God, "for you have carried me as a Cross on your shoulders." And Satan was furious. Then God created Man, and gave Satan the custody of the dead; but God soon found there were more dead than living, and wished to break the pact, but He could not break His word. So He created the Lord, His Son, and the Lord said to Satan, "My Father promised you the dead, but I have come to redeem them," and so God reclaimed the dead.

A darkie preacher, far away "down South" in America, had also his views on the Creation of the World, and one day preaching to his brethren he took it as a subject.

Very briefly he summed up the Creation.

"Fust de good Lord created light,
 —and den He took a rest—
 Den de good Lord created de hebbens and de waters—
 —and den He took a rest—
 And den de good Lord created de beasts and de fishes—
 —den He took a rest—
 And den de good Lord created Man—
 And den He took a rest—

Den de Lord created Woman——

——and neither God nor Man hab had
any rest since ! ”

• • • • •
We had left the monastery with the intention of going on to Tirnova, the ancient Bulgarian capital. It lies at the head of the Yantra Gorge, and our road lay beside the rocky bed of the river, which was swollen with spring rains and melting snow from the mountains. The trees up this valley were extraordinarily varied : we noticed any quantity of cypresses and willows—also mulberries for the silk culture the peasants go in for, while the numerous wild pear, cherry, plum and apple trees were just beginning to clothe the hill-side with their blossoming beauty.

We found the carriage waiting for us at the bottom of the hill, and John with many smiling compliments ready to tuck us in. Our experience of the Bulgarian people was that they were generally pleasant and obliging, and though neither of us could understand much of what the other said (unless Dimitri was there to interpret), a certain freemasonry of signs and ideas generally succeeded in making things intelligible.

The remaining portion of the road to Tirnova cuts through a winding gorge of rock capped with verdure, and as we crept up the steep incline and turned the last bend of outstanding crag the city appeared. I have travelled far and seen beautiful places in many lands—Taormina clinging to the cliffs over the sapphire seas at her feet, Cuernavaca in far-distant Mexico, nestling like an emerald under the diamond-frosted diadem of majestic Popocatepetl, Nikko slumbering in the stately silence of her sacred woods—but this ancient capital of the Bulgarian Tzars, combining in its grey, weather-worn austerity the rugged history of the tumultuous past with its position of unique beauty, yielded but little to the others in its appeal to me.

No description or photograph can give a true idea of the impression it makes upon the traveller ! Built irregularly on a precipitous cliff anything over seven hundred feet high, the houses are of all shapes and colours and rise irregularly tier upon tier above each other. Bunched-up against the scarred limestone, they hang like limpets on a rock in an indescribably picturesque confusion and disorder. Steep

little steps cut out of the stone, or tortuous paths, narrow and intricate, connect them one with another.

Above, perched on the hill-top, stands the Hissar or fort, in bygone days a mosque, and on the hills around are curious, fortified-looking walls; they are naturally shaped formations taken advantage of by the Tzars, who ingeniously strengthened them by additions of strong stonework and so made them into lines of fortifications.

In the town much colour-wash has been used on the walls of the houses, softened by time into faint shades of rose, blue and cream, and this, with the warm browns and reds of the woodwork and roofs, and the storm-beaten aspect of the old walls of the city, comprises a fine harmony of colour. Many of the houses are low-gabled and of great age, with small windows and doors high above the level of the street and winter snow-drifts.

Inside the town the cobbled streets are narrow and precipitous, the deep, overhanging Turkish eaves of the houses, browned and purpled by centuries of winter storms, almost touch each other in the narrower ones, and from the balconies you look down a dizzy depth to the broiling Yantra eight hundred feet below.

Tortuous, precipitous old alleys, and deep winding paths intersect each other, in which dogs, pigs and poultry and a skittish calf or two jostle and bump, nosing and sniffing at the vines on the old houses, or at scraps in the gutters. The gardens—tiny patches of cultivation—are in narrow terraces, such as are found in the Tyrol or Italy, and steps cut in the mountain-side lead from one bit to the other.

The view all around is magnificent. As far as the eye can range are the hills, and beyond come the gloomy Balkan range, the Stara-Planina, with their snowy peaks shrouded in cloud.

A narrow causeway of rock juts out from the town, widening into an island shape, and this giant bar, cutting straight across the river's track, causes it to swing round in a big loop, like a monster frying-pan in shape. On this island-shaped formation—with its tumbled rocks giving it the appearance of a ruined fort—the Chingani, as the gypsies are called here, have made their home, half-hidden by trees and verdure that have sprung up.

On the other side of the stream one looks down on the

Turkish quarter. High-walled houses, shuttered windows, and the tall minaret and round dome of the mosque gleam in the sunlight. There seems little movement there, some dark-hooded forms move slowly along; laden donkeys with slouching men beside them, a cart or two, and some children playing, is all the life one sees from above.

There is quite a fair hotel down in the new part of the town near the railway station, for Tirnova has recently been linked up with Sofia by rail. But we preferred to stop at a more primitive inn up on the hill-side, which had a glorious view over the tangle of roofs, gardens, walls and terraces down to the cataract below.

Beyond, lay the long, winding gorge of the Yantra, and the hills, rising tier above tier, in all their beauty of spring verdure, the flush of blossom and the rose madder of awakening sap in trunk and branch. Game of all kinds abounds in these hills—wolves, bear, deer, wild boar—while down in the valley the sportsman will find plenty of wild fowl to repay his labours.

It seems a prosperous town now, but tranquil and sleepy as the Middle Ages. One feels indeed far, far away from the busy twentieth century of bustle, dash and progress, the rattle of trains, the quack-quack of motor-cars, and the ceaseless rumble of a mighty, stirring age, in this primitive spot.

In the bazaar one can pick up many a quaint little bit of old Bulgarian jewellery, oriental in its style, brasses, old rugs, an ikon, Turkish or Bulgarian embroidery, at a modest price, but, as in all Eastern countries, one must be prepared to allow a certain time for the necessary bargaining.

Down one of the wider old cobbled streets a number of housewives were hunched on the ground outside their houses, kneading great flat rolls of paste to be made into the native bread so like to that which one sees in Turkey.

Each woman worked on a round table on legs, rising only about six inches off the ground, on which she rolled the paste with a long, thin wooden roller. When rolled out sufficiently flat, very thin and about eighteen inches in size they are laid on linen cloths down one side of the street, where they bake leisurely in the sun.

They were a cheery, gossiping crowd, and took as great an interest in us as we in them!

At the far end of the street a great quacking sounded, and we saw a flock of geese of all shades and tones being driven homewards from the market square. They must have numbered nearly two hundred—the many tones and changing lights on their soft plumage making a charming colour scheme.

Near the bazaar stands a large old house, with weather-stained walls and sagging window-frames. It has rather the appearance of an old Turkish inn or khan. This was the house where the great Bulgar statesman and patriot Stambuloff was born, and which has been in possession of his family for many years.

It was here at Tirnova that the first Bulgar parliament was held, when the crown was offered to and accepted by the brave but unfortunate Prince Alexander, and here, amid tumultuous scenes, the throne was again offered to Ferdinand the Coburger.

To the artist and student of history and archæology this old capital offers many an attraction. Subjects for the kodak or brush meet you at every turn—peasants in their quaint costumes, bringing produce from the country-side in primitive carts, women staggering under stacks of fuel or hay, and the baker sitting in his open shop, before the huge oven from which he roots out with a five-foot-long fork a steaming loaf for the purchaser, are only a few out of the many pictures one sees. The flocks of goats and sheep, wandering singly in the streets, or scattered over the hill-side, the faint chime of their tinkling bells borne on the wind, and guarded by the lonely shepherds, make one feel indeed that this is the East.

Indeed Byzantium has left a deep impress on this ancient city, once also occupied by the Russians. In some recent excavations by the French no fewer than the foundations and ruins of seventeen old Byzantium churches were found. Two very interesting ones that have defied the ravages of age and war are well worth a visit. The Church of the Forty Martyrs bears this inscription :

“ Built in the name of the Forty Martyrs, 1230, by the Bulgarian King John, Asen the II., to commemorate his victory over the Greeks; converted into a mosque during the Turkish occupation and retransferred into a Christian Church, 1877.”

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

Many are the stories of the ghosts and spirits which haunt the old edifice and which are believed in alike by Turk and Christian. The most persistent one is the frequent appearance of a beautiful golden-haired woman, "Belata Tsena" as she is called, and who has been often seen, I was told.

The other is the Metropolitan Church, of Byzantine architecture, with an old door and dome of burnished copper, which glitters brilliantly in the sun and can be seen for miles. The interior smells damp and cold, dust lies thickly everywhere, and one's footsteps echo hauntingly in the silent air. Dim old frescoes, nearly obliterated, gleam faintly from the walls, while the columns of black marble strike a curious note of decision amongst the dusty grey hues of age. Once a year a service is held—but for the remainder, solitude and the pallor of the past enshroud it once again.

Below the church are deep, dark dungeons where many a poor prisoner languished for years in darkness and despair. How it clutches one's heart, the memory of the tragic scenes these old dungeons must have witnessed in the cruel, bygone past! And how pitiful and of little account life was in those stormy days! Some have scratched tremulously on the walls the pitiful record of their doomed existence; others have vanished into dust, forgotten and unknown.

VIII.

THE FOX'S EARTH.

"He that loses his conscience has nothing left that is worth keeping."

ISAAC WALTON.

THE earliest accounts of Bulgaria date from the third century, when some Slavs settled in the Dobruđja and thence wandered into the Balkan Peninsula. They were a tall, strongly-built race, and for these barbarous times their character was fairly free from the excessive cruelty and treachery which then universally prevailed. They lived in polygamy, and when the big men died their wives and attendants were burned or buried with their lords in the great funeral mounds. The changes in the seasons meant much to these people, who lived by the fruits of their agricultural labours, and they celebrated them with festivals which have been preserved down to this day. Their barter was in sheep and cattle, and money held little importance as such till later times. The skulls of their enemies were used as drinking-cups, the left hand was usually regarded as the place of honour, and when a treaty was signed it was done upon the open sword, and dogs were cut in two and their blood sprinkled over it. Their war standard was a horse's tail, something like the Turkish "bunchuk."

Late in the seventh century a tribe of Finnish or Tartar Bulgars from the Volga crossed the Danube and occupied the country now called Bulgaria, and it took about two hundred years to weld together the conquerors and the subject race. But so complete was the fusion of the Bulgar with the Slav and so paramount the influence of the latter nationality that in the Bulgarian language as we find it to-day few traces of the conquering race survive.

During the reign of King Boris in 852 Christianity re-

placed the pagan worship of the earlier peoples, who had made deities of the rivers, nymphs, trees, but recognized the lightning as their principal god. The two great Slavonic founders of the orthodox faith were the brothers St. Cyril and St. Methodius. It was the son of this Boris, the Tzar Simeon, who was the greatest of all the rulers of ancient Bulgaria. He reigned in the early years of the ninth century and at the same time when England was slowly emerging from the domination of the Danes, under King Alfred, who, Lord Roschery has said, was "The pioneer of England's greatness—the embodiment of our civilization—one of the race-sovereigns recognized in the darkness of Europe."

The great Tzar Simeon raised his country to the level of the then mighty Byzantium, and, ruling over the greater part of this south-western part of Europe, made treaties as conqueror with the successors of the Roman Cæsars, the rulers of Byzantium, and the Greek Emperors.

It was a golden period, and literature, under the aegis of the King, Bishop Constantine, and Pope Gregory, was raised in the short space of fifty years to a level not far below that of the Latin and the Greek. His palaces were lofty and wonderful buildings, frescoes, precious marbles, inlay and all kinds of polished wood and sculptured stone enriched and beautified them. He was likened unto the great King *Ptolemy of Egypt* by his contemporaries, for the wonders and richness of his apparel and palaces, the churches he built, the wealth of his nobles and the success of his armies. He received the imperial crown from Rome and took the title of Tzar of the Bulgarians and Ruler of the Greeks. He died in 927.

After Simeon's death the Empire gradually declined, a brief flicker during the reigns of Samuel in 976 and Kaloyan in 1197 delaying its final absorption by Turkey.

It was during the reign of the Tzar Samuel that one of the most tragic events of past history occurred—an episode which has been kept alive in the hearts of every Bulgarian by poems which as children they have learnt and sung round the fire on winter evenings. King Basil of Byzantium, the firmide on winter evenings. King Basil of Byzantium, "the Bulgar Slayer" as he was called for his atrocities, had defeated the Bulgarian forces at the great fortress of Philip in Macedonia. As proof of his power and vengeance he caused 15,000 of the prisoners he had taken to be blinded in

both eyes, leaving only one in every hundred with the sight of one. These were ordered to guide the desolate victims back to their Tzar Samuel as evidence of his vengeance.

The Tzar, on seeing these stricken remnants of his great army, fainted, and on being brought round, fainted again. So great was his anguish that he died of grief two days after.

The flickering flame of the declining Empire flamed up again brilliantly during the reign of Ivan Asen II., 1218-1241. He held his court at Tirmova, "the city of the Tzars, Queen of cities, the second in word and deed after Constantine's great city," as the old records have it; but it only slightly delayed the fall of the Bulgarian Empire, which was devastated and destroyed by the Turks, who for the next five centuries ruled it by fire and the sword. The national consciousness and life was almost completely paralysed, for the Turk never gave but two chances to the countries he conquered, serfdom or Turkdom, and Bulgaria being closer to Turkey than Serbia, Greece or Roumania, felt the full force of its crushing despotism.

Her fate during these long centuries can perhaps be best compared to the grain of wheat lying in the mummy's tomb for generations, which on being restored to earth springs to life again. It is an extraordinary instance of an apparently dead and forgotten nation, reborn by the help of Russia, the mother of the Slav nations, and freed from the Turk.

On the successful issue of the Russo-Turkish war in 1878, the Powers of Europe decided at the Treaty of Berlin to create the Principality of Bulgaria, detaching it from the Ottoman Empire and making it an independent Principality, but subject to the Sultan and paying tribute to Turkey. By its terms the Prince of Bulgaria was to be freely chosen by the Bulgarian nation and accepted by the Sublime Porte with the approval of the Great Powers, and no member of a reigning European family might be elected.

Such was the rebirth of modern Bulgaria, the youngest independent state, with the exception of Albania, in the Balkan Peninsula. It was composed, for the greater part, of hardy peasants recently emancipated from the Turkish yoke, when the election that secured Alexander of Battenberg as Prince of Bulgaria took place in 1879.

His reign of six years was marked by a great increase of

territory to the nation in the acquirement of Eastern Roumelia, and the war with Serbia, in which the Bulgarians showed their mettle as fighters, and their confidence in their self-chosen Prince, seemed to afford some hope of sustained national development.

But misfortune dogged the footsteps of this courageous, gallant, but ill-fated ruler. Intrigues and jealousy, together with the disloyalty of some of his own subjects, forced him to abdicate, and the country was once more plunged into unrest and indecision. Russia tried her utmost during this time to render her influence paramount, but was thwarted and defeated by the wholly unexpected independence of action and skilful diplomacy of that sturdy patriot Stambuloff.

An anxious time followed before the nation's choice fell upon Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, the spoilt younger son of Princess Clementine of Orleans, the daughter of Louis Philippe of France. She was one of the cleverest and most intriguing Royalties in Europe and invariably known as a "Talleyrand in petticoats." She felt fate had dealt her a bitter blow in marrying her to a Prince of no importance when her ambitious nature pined for the throne of a Queen. As a consequence, she bent the full force of her astute scheming brain towards realising some of her frustrated ambitions in the person of her son. He was twenty-six years of age when he accepted the precarious throne and was elected Prince of Bulgaria in 1887.

His task was beset with difficulties on every side. An aristocrat by nature and tradition, Teutonic and arrogant, he found himself at the head of a democratic nation as yet in its raw infancy, prone to suspicion of a foreigner, an alien in religion and speech, and which watched his every action and utterance with criticism and curiosity.

At the time of Prince Ferdinand's election Stambuloff was at the height of his power, a typical Bulgarian, rugged, strenuous, and Bulgaria's greatest patriot; ambitious and determined, with an inflexible will, he was yet straightforward, incapable of deceit, and just the vigorous type of man to impress his personality on the nation.

It needs a strong man to bring a nation through the throes of birth, and settle it securely on the path of progress, and a fairly free hand must be allowed to such an one. Stambuloff,

like the late President Porfirio Diaz of Mexico, was virtually a dictator and a man of much the same stamp of sturdy independence and self-reliant genius. His great political gifts and personality dominated the Government, and overshadowed the first few years of Prince Ferdinand's reign.

From the first Ferdinand evinced an attitude of jealous antagonism to this "Bismarck of the Balkans" who had called him to the throne, and as the years progressed his hatred of the sturdy patriot-statesman increased and several abortive attempts on his life were made. The Prince had inaugurated a service of espionage and secret police as remarkable as that of his neighbour the Sultan, and his myrmidons were as unscrupulous in intrigue and assassination as their Turkish confederates.

But the Prince was determined to get rid of his Minister, and once assured of his position, his scheming, ambitious nature showed itself, and he grasped the reins of power with the full limit of authority permitted him. Troubles, intrigues and dissensions arose in the Cabinet, and in 1894 Prince Ferdinand accepted the resignation of Stambuloff after a period of seven years' service as Prime Minister.

In accepting his resignation the Prince made use of the following words in which he could not help doing justice to the great services of the dismissed statesman. But the hypocrisy and falsehood of Ferdinand's nature and his attitude to Stambuloff up to the final tragic climax of his assassination can be read between the lines.

"From the day of my entry into Bulgaria I saw in you my most intimate counsellor, to whom, as to a model patriot, I, with entire confidence, entrusted all my political ideas and decisions, ever seeking your ripe counsel, and whatever the circumstance, I found in my chief adviser the qualities which distinguish the faithful friend, the energetic statesman, the warm defender of the cause of Bulgaria and the faithful subject. . . . Having no other means of proving to you my most cordial gratitude, which I have endeavoured to express to you on previous occasions, in the present rescript I declare to you most solemnly that for all you have done in the path of progress, for the development of the country, for the strengthening and improvement of our relations with foreign countries and with neighbouring states, for all the services you have rendered me with ex-

emplary patriotism, for your loyal support of the crown and dynasty, I shall always entertain towards you sentiments of goodwill, gratitude and friendly attachment."

The pilot had been dropped, and the "Coburger," or "The Fox," as he will ever be called, could now direct unrestrained his country's policy according to the dictates of his cunning brain.

There are many who seem to think that the entry of Bulgaria into the European war, on the side of the Central Empires, is entirely due to the autocratic rule and ambitious scheming of its Teutonic ruler, and that he has overridden the voice of the people in his decision to ally himself with their hereditary enemy and oppressor the Turk, and fight against their great liberator Russia.

This is not the fact—make no mistake about it.

The Bulgar people, with a few splendid solitary exceptions, are solid for booty and aggrandizement.

There is no place in their dour nature for any gratitude to the country that gave them their freedom. The only appeal they understand is that of material advantage; and to see something in the hand of another is but to envy and covet it.

They are not out for an ideal, for the cause of humanity or progress. No—that does not come within the scope of their comprehension.

They are at one with their Coburg master in their "esprit de rapine," which he has inherited from his ancestors the Huns, and the Bulgar from his Tartar forefathers.

Nearly half the Bulgarian race are of this Tartar Bulgar strain, and this still persists, so that one can well understand the latent savagery, doggedness and materialism of the national character.

It is possible to draw a line on the map, starting from Kustendil to Tchetiman, east of Sofia, thence northwards to the Danube parallel to the Serbian frontier, showing all the eastern part of Bulgaria, as peopled by this strain. One even sees the characteristic traits, high cheek bones, yellow skins, the purple pink cheeks and brilliant black hair and beards, that mark the type in the districts east of Sofia and on the way to the Danube.

The western portion of this imaginary line is entirely Slav

Bulgar: Slav in type, temperament and inheritance. Indeed so Slav is it that for the last forty years the Bulgarian schoolmasters, from the Serbian frontier up to Sofia itself, have vainly endeavoured to teach the children the official Bulgarian language.

If a peasant from Varna on the Black Sea were to travel in the direction of the Adriatic, and another peasant—a Serbo-Croatian of the Adriatic—were to travel from the Aegean to the Black Sea, it would be easily seen how much further the Serb's language would carry him than that of the Bulgar.

The Macedonia that Bulgaria has so long coveted and intrigued for is peopled by the Slav race. True, there are many Bulgars who have emigrated and settled there in the past century, and many bands of the terrible Bulgarian *comitadjis*, who have earned for themselves an unsavoury reputation.

But Bulgaria has only occupied Macedonia twice—and that only for a total period of 124 years out of a cycle of twelve centuries.

There have been historians and travellers in past times who have called the Macedonians Bulgarians, and partisans of this thesis have drawn from this an argument in favour of the latter term. But this method of calling Macedonians Bulgarians is only a relic from the tenth century, when Macedonia was occupied by Bulgaria. Its inhabitants were Slavs, not then organized into a state with a national name, and only known by the name of the region they lived in, and were designated Bulgarians by the chroniclers of past times. But this term had only a political and not an ethnological significance. It was a term applied indiscriminately to all subjects of the ancient Bulgarian Empire, and in no way designated their real nationality.

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Since the Coburger's accession, he has earned for his country the title of the "Judas of the Slav race." The first betrayal took place in the Balkan war of 1913, when, allied with Serbia and Greece against Turkey, he thought he saw a chance of bettering himself by traitorously turning on his Allies. Heaven granted some justice this time, and he was soundly thrashed for his treachery, and lost all the country he had acquired in the previous fighting.

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But treacherous instincts can never be eradicated, and the Bulgarians and their ruler only bided their time till they could find a better opportunity. For ever since this first betrayal the Fox has never ceased to fix his hungry, covetous eyes on the Macedonia but most of any other horn roost he might plunder with safety—and the Central Powers dangled the bait before him all the time.

In October, 1915, his plans were fully hatched. Afraid to venture alone he joined the other marauders, and the Fox slipped out on his raid with the results all the world knows.

The second betrayal has taken place. Ferdinand has the thirty pieces of silver in his pocket, having betrayed the liberator, thrown dirt in the face of his country's liberator, and linked arms with his centuries old enemy, the Turk.

This Balkan Nero—as he has even been called by the people in his own capital of Sofia—has the usual Teutonic disregard for honour and tradition, and agreements to him and his Ministers are simply pie-crust made to be broken. There is no sentiment either in him or his people. Their aim is that of material advantage and acquisition of territory, and if this is to be gained by linking up arms with the Teuton, the Devil or the Turk, it matters little to them as long as it promises to be the winning side. The moment they see their Allies failing, you will see them begin to hedge at once and endeavour to trundle to the other side.

How the few really patriotic minds in Bulgaria with honourable ideals must wince when their eyes fall on the palace of the Tsar traitor, which faces the great statue of the Tsar Liberator, standing in mute protest in the centre of their city!

The ultimate fate of Bulgaria as a state in subservience to Germany, and with her policy dictated from Berlin, is less distasteful to this Coburger and his people than it would be to the more purely national spirited peoples of Serbia, Roumania and Greece, who have more clearly defined ideals of freedom and national liberty.

For in some respects the Bulgarian and Teutonic characters resemble one another in their insidious and unscrupulous pursuit of material aims. But such similarity as exists must be a natural coincidence, and one can hardly find its roots in the history of the past when one remembers that it was the Central Powers who were responsible for reducing

Bulgaria to half the size awarded her by Russia at the treaty of San Stefano.

The Kaiser and King Ferdinand's mentality are curiously alike: both have the shrewd, scheming brain and the arrogant qualities of the megalomaniac, and both are similar in the pursuit of their own immediate aims irrespective of the cost to their Allies.

During the last fifteen years this Teutonic influence has made itself felt more and more, and the Central Powers have courted and flattered Bulgaria to such an extent that it made it an easier matter for that nation to subordinate its purely national ideas and place itself at their disposition. Meanwhile having obtained in Macedonia what she wanted, if only temporarily, we may be certain that Bulgaria has no intention of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for anyone, and will only sullenly acquiesce in her obligations to her Allies.

As M. Madgaroff, one of Bulgaria's leading diplomats and true patriots, has said: "The present actions and policy of Bulgaria will stand for ever as the blackest spot in Bulgarian history." The country has failed in its moral obligations, and the due fulfilment of these must be always the basis of the existence of all states.

The German bribe has made Ferdinand betray the nation, the Church and her Allies, and has placed Bulgaria completely under German domination. For it is against these three countries—Russia, England and France—King Ferdinand has taken up arms—the countries who espoused the Bulgarian cause in 1869, and insisted on the Porte issuing a firman establishing a Bulgarian national church under an Exarch, instead of under the Greek Patriarchate.

This was a tremendously important advance for Bulgaria, for it meant recognition of her as a nation: her geographical limits were to a certain extent defined, and she gained the right of appointment to the dioceses. It also gave a great impetus to educational activity, which has had such an enormous influence in advancing the country.

The abortive rising against the Turks in 1876, and the massacres that followed, brought Russia to the help of her small neighbour, and by her defeat of the Turks in the Russo-Turkish war in 1878, and the Treaty of San Stefano, dictated by her at the very gates of Constantinople, she secured for

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Bulgaria the realization of her national aspirations, and later, at the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, her independence as a nation.

This is the country which basely does and turns on her liberators.

What his relatives think of this scheming renegade king, who rules over this nation of "ingrats," is well illustrated in the following letter, sent him by his cousin, Ferdinand of Orleans, Duke of Montpensier :

" COUSIN,

" Three years ago, after your victories over the Turks, I sent you my warm congratulations. I was proud of the relationship between us, I followed with pride the progress of what you yourself termed the ' Holy Crusade,' and I divined your soul's secret ambition to make your charger's hoofs ring upon the steps of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

" To-day, bursting outrageously the ties of gratitude which bind you to Russia, who set Bulgaria free, betraying the national aspirations of your people, you, a Prince of French blood, throw yourself into the arms of those very Turks, your enemies of yesterday, who have now become in addition the enemies of France. Given the choice between the generous and noble soul of France, shedding her blood in defence of her threatened homes, between those glorious Allies, generously fighting for the noblest of causes, the liberty of the peoples, and the hands of barbarians, pillagers, assassins, and traitors, your degenerate heart is drawn towards the latter.

" Your saintly mother, my aunt Clementine, daughter of a King of France, and herself a faithful Frenchwoman ; your uncles, those noble, unsullied soldiers, Orleans, Aumale, Nemours, and Chartres, if they hear the earth's uproar, must rise in their graves to hurl their curse in your face.

" And I, who so often sent you my affectionate and loving wishes, especially on your name day, which is mine also—I, who saw in you a son of France doing honour to his house, I, who saw in you a son of France doing honour to his house, disown you now. I know you no more ; I abandon you to your apostasies, your remorse, your Turks, and your Boches !

" FERDINAND OF ORLEANS,

" DUKE OF MONTPENSIER."

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In appearance King Ferdinand is a tall, rather corpulently-built man, with the long drooping nose, which in these Eastern countries generally proclaims the Jew. The narrow, furtive eyes are blue, set close together: the expression is one of insolent vanity and hauteur. The small leaven of French blood in his veins has been completely adulterated by his Teutonic strain and upbringing, and he possesses in a marked degree the most undesirable traits of his nation. Arrogant and pretentious, he makes use of a pretence of honesty as a cloak for the fulfilment of his crafty scheming.

His extravagance and ostentation have made him anything but popular—it is said that his first marriage cost the nation more than £100,000—and it is generally conceded in Sofia, as elsewhere, that he is not a man to be trusted. He has never gained the heart of the people, as the chivalrous, ill-fated hero Prince Alexander did, and his strict observance of court etiquette and chill formality have built a wall between him and his people. They fear, but do not love him.

He married in 1893 Princess Marie Louise, the daughter of the Duke of Parma, by whom he had two sons and two daughters. The Princess was a gentle, pretty girl of twenty-three, but the cynical, self-indulgent life led by Ferdinand unfitted him to be a considerate husband, and her short married life was a veritable misery. She had little to look forward to in the way of happiness, and after the birth of her fourth child she slipped quietly out of life. The elder son, Prince Boris, was baptized unto the Orthodox Greek Faith, the religion of his country and his future subjects. His parents being Catholic, this proceeding aroused a perfect storm of controversy and criticism in Austria, even to the point of a threat of excommunication from Rome, happily averted, however, by the intercession of relatives.

In the case of the neighbouring kingdom of Roumania, the elder children of the Roumanian Royal Family—whose father is a Catholic—were similarly baptized in the faith of their country, the Orthodox Greek Church. But though the cases were practically identical, Roumania was spared the bitter antagonism shown to King Ferdinand of Bulgaria by the Roman church.

King Ferdinand, who has a crafty, contorted and an exceedingly egotistical nature, felt disinclined towards another

marriage after the death of the gentle Princess he had treated with so little kindness. It was an effort to him to show the necessary observance of respect and courtesy that the ordinary "convenances" expected from him as a husband, and it was not until after the death of his mother, the Princess Clementine, that he felt the honours of his court, such as it is, would be enhanced by the presence of a consort.

He found it a somewhat difficult matter, as his reputation made most of the royalties look coldly upon his advances: also his egoism prevented him from looking for any wife except amongst the "sang and," and a woman of intelligence and ability who would help him in his ambitious designs. Good fortune smiled upon him, however, and he was lucky enough, after some little initial difficulty, in persuading Princess Eleonore of Rouss-Kontich to become his wife.

She was fifty years old, capable, intelligent and kindly, and with an independence of spirit that augured well for her not being treated in the same way as his first wife. Neither of them were in the least attracted to each other, and it was simply a political affair, into which she brought some Russian influence through her aunt, the Grand Duchess Vladimir, and her close family ties with the Imperial houses of Germany and Austria, and on which King Ferdinand counted in advancing the ambitious designs he was secretly fostering.

Much has been initiated and accomplished for Bulgaria's material progress during the last twenty years, and the conditions of the country's existence have been materially altered since the Treaty of Berlin. Bulgaria has renounced the tribute tax to Turkey, the capitulations are abolished, and commercial treaties can now be executed independently between Bulgaria and other nations.

King Ferdinand's shrewdness has helped him over countless difficulties in dealing with a people essentially democratic, who, though possessing some qualities, have the distinctive failings of a peasant democracy, self-sufficiency, narrowness of outlook, and a disposition to niggardly expenditure.

Gradually an upper class has been evolved from the general level of small farmers, and the bourgeoisie, which increases with the prosperity of the country. Their men

study at the Universities of Moscow, Vienna, and Paris, and have aided in the national progress.

Bulgaria, placed as she is between Powers that she has rendered hostile by her devious and underhand policy, and which are only too eager to annex and assimilate her, has wisely devoted herself to the creation of an efficient and—for the size of the country—a large army.

Even to the casual observer it is evident that it is a well-equipped fighting machine. The Bulgarian is a born fighter, tough, wily and a good shot, and the service is popular. Every man has to serve, and even if physically disabled only escapes by a tax, while the Moslems can only evade it by a fine of £20. The nation numbers about four and a half millions of people, "and is able to put into the field 350,000 men in time of war."

Bulgaria has not adopted the Turkish principle, which rules in Serbia, of permitting one able-bodied wage-earning male to be exempt and left to support the family. Unlike Turkey, too, who has none but Mohammedans in her army, she requires that all nationalities who have settled in the land, be they Jews, Turks, gypsies, Roumanians or Serbians, should serve or pay a heavy fine.

The army, to a considerable extent, is organized on the Russian system, drill, rank, uniform, bugle calls, etc., but the theoretical science is that of Germany. The Bulgarian officer is a steady and most conscientious worker, and the recruits under his charge experience a time of solid hard work and discipline during their term of service. A large portion of their two years' practical training is devoted to rifle practice. Their artillery equipment is excellent—eighty-one field batteries are equipped with the 75 mm. Schneider; nine mountain batteries have the 75 mm. Schneider and nine the 75 mm. Krupp, while there are eight howitzer batteries of 120 mm. and two of 150 mm.

The greater part of the population of Bulgaria is agricultural, and though she has great mineral wealth, for lack of enterprise and money mining has made no start as yet.

She has a high mileage of railways and her rolling stock is comfortable and modern, in fact, most of her railways are home-built; the country districts are being opened up by good roads, and she has two good ports on the Black Sea,

Varna and Burgas, on one of which seven million francs has been expended.

From a commercial and industrial standpoint the country has great natural resources with which to expand in peaceful development.

Apart from her mineral deposits she is also abundantly supplied with numerous mineral springs, which the Government are exploiting and the medical profession certify as possessing many curative qualities. One or two are within easy distance of Sofia, and should hotels and bath-houses be built there, ought to become successful and prosperous *villes d'eaux*.

Indeed, there are hot springs at their very door, for right in the heart of the city, beside the old mosque, are some bubbling sulphur springs which could be utilized. But it would mean the demolition of the picturesque old building, which the Government hesitate to effect for fear of offending the prejudices of the Turkish population.

The most important springs are at Krusjevo, Dolna Banja and Merichkovi, while at Sliven they have an excellent pump and bath establishment on the newest lines. Hissar has also an important establishment much recommended by the medical profession.

Tobacco is largely grown and largely consumed, for Bulgarians are all great smokers of the fragrant leaf.

Perhaps the most interesting industry, however, and one which constitutes one of Bulgaria's most important exports, is that of the culture of roses. Apart from the pleasant and lucrative occupation it provides for some thousands of the country people, there is something very enchanting and poetical about the forests of rose trees, the air laden with their wonderful fragrance and the peasants in their gay country dress devoting their lives to cultivating the beautiful flower.

The rose district lies on the Thracian plain, and extends over an 80 mile patch at an altitude of 1,300 feet. Dotted all over this area are the 173 villages whose inhabitants devote their days to the rose culture. The Turks were the original starters of this industry here, and they had learnt the secret of the culture and distillation from the Persians—"atir" being a Persian word meaning perfume—fragrance. The little towns of Shipka and Kazanlik are the

principal centres of the work and show an assured air of prosperity. A head-man, rejoicing in the delightful name of *churhoji* or "maker of soap," generally rules the village, and is usually an influential and well-to-do peasant.

The rose trees are planted in long rows, and the height of their beauty and fragrance is attained towards the middle of May and on through June.

A most delightful two days' ride can be made then through this sweet-smelling land, drinking in the beauty of the massed blooms, and breathing the perfume that floats in the air for miles around.

The buxom peasant girls in their bright dresses, and with wreaths of the roses coquettishly adorning their hair, work from sunrise to sunset in the fields; in fact, whole families devote themselves to the harvest.

The attar is distilled from the deep red "*Rosa Damascena*" and the white "*Rosa Moscata*"; three hundred roses go to a pound, and it takes from 160 to 250 pounds of rose-leaves to make one ounce of attar! The peasant gets about £1 an ounce for the attar, but the same ounce is generally sold in Paris or London for four or five times that amount. The average bearing life of a rose-tree is from twenty to twenty-five years, and this is wonderful when one thinks of the rich crop they yield annually.

Attempts have been made to grow the roses for attar in other districts, but failure has resulted, and only rose-water was obtained from them. Apparently their success in this region is due to some peculiar quality of the soil and some atmospheric influences, helped perhaps by the formation of the surrounding hills—it is difficult to say, but, at any rate, the attar rose is exceedingly sensitive to climatic conditions. The winters are very severe in these regions, which makes it the more astonishing that such rich fragrant blooms and such healthy trees can be produced.

The peasants, generally, in Bulgaria look clean, prosperous and contented, and indeed they may; for in many districts the land is productive and will yield them all they want, conducted even as it is, with the ancient archaic implements of a past age. They are already beginning to work their valuable mineral wealth, horse and cattle breeding is claiming much attention among the well-to-do farmers, and their exports have risen enormously in the last ten years.

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The Government has built good schools and gymnasiums all over the country, and several agricultural and technical colleges have also been opened, affording excellent instruction in all branches. The State schools are free and the educational system is very good, the average of those who could read and write is high, about sixty per cent.

In summer and early autumn the schools are closed to allow of the children working on the farm with their parents. They go to school at the early age of from three to four, and leave it at twelve, and either return to the farm, or, if intelligent, remain at school working up the higher subjects. Some of the wealthier people send their sons to the Robert College, an American institution on the Bosphorus, where they learn to speak fluent French and English.

In character they are a phlegmatic, unimaginative and stolid race: a sullen, silent, and unresponsive people. As fighters they are stubborn and fierce; as farmers and peasants, hard-working, thrifty and sober, save for an occasional glass of "raki," the national drink; but the Bulgarian is no tippler. His dour nature needs the stimulus of political intrigue or war to arouse it, and he then displays a brutality and ferocity that is latent, but very savage.

Ward Price, the well-known war correspondent, writing from the Balkans in February 1916, gives an instance of this in the account a captured Bulgarian corporal gave him of the massacre of the Serbian prisoners at Prilep. This man was almost ashamed to relate it, so terrible was the picture of bloodthirsty ferocity stamped on his memory.

"A few days before the fighting round *Drenovo* (for the *Rainjor* and *Vozari* bridges) began," he said, "250 men belonging to my pluk, or regiment, which consists of men recruited on the banks of the Danube, were sent to help pull the guns up into the mountain along the *Babuna* Pass. (It will be remembered that at that time part of the Serbian army was making a desperate stand on the *Babuna* Pass to defend *Monastir* against a much superior enemy force advancing from *Veles*, and the outflanking movement through the mountains was one of the methods the Bulgarians used to drive them back.) "We were at work on this," he went on, "when word came that *Prilep* was taken, so that there was no need to go on with the march through the mountains,

and our guns could be brought back and enter Prilep by road.

"We came down into the pass and were just approaching Prilep, being in view of the barracks in the plain outside the town, when we saw a working party of about forty men with picks and shovels approaching. We were halted at the time, and when they began to dig a big pit, which was clearly meant to be used as a grave, we asked them what so big a grave was needed for. 'There are a few dead in the town,' they answered, and went on with their work.

"A STRAGGLING PROCESSION.

"At about five o'clock in the afternoon, while we still waited for orders where to take our guns, we saw coming out of the town towards us a long, straggling procession of Serbian soldier prisoners, about 300, surrounded by a strong escort of infantry. They were all ages; some were young boys of fifteen, some old men, bowed of back, with grey in their beards, hungry looking and ragged, bearing the marks of their long fight in the pass. They shambled along, evidently without any idea to what they were going till they came close to where this new-dug pit lay open. There the command to halt was given, and they stood or sat, surrounded by their guards, for about an hour. At the end of that time another body of men could be seen coming out of the town. They were Bulgarian cavalry, about 80 of them, with a captain in command. At a deliberate walk they came on towards the throng of prisoners and guards at the pit-side.

"When they were still several hundred yards away, a young Serbian soldier evidently grasped what was preparing. Making a sudden dart, he sprang through the cordon of guards and was off, running at a surprising speed. The guards shouted, but their rifles, though with bayonets fixed, were not loaded, and it looked for a moment as if he might get clear away. Then the captain of the cavalry troop caught sight of him, turned round in his saddle, and shouted an order to his men. Half a dozen spurred their horses and left the ranks at a gallop. It was a short chase. Hearing the thud of the horses' hoofs behind him, the young Serbian turned his head for an instant, and then ran on faster than

before. The galloping cavalry were soon close up with him. As the first man, with a shout, raised his sword, the fugitive doubled like a hare and was away at right angles. Two more horsemen were close behind. The first rode him down, the second leaped out of his saddle and pierced him through as he scrambled to regain his feet.

"By this time the guards of the rest of the Serbians had loaded their rifles and stood round them in a ring, with levelled bayonets, while, huddled together, their prisoners embraced each other or sank in apathy to the ground. The cavalry captain rode up to the miserable throng. 'Each man will bind the eyes of his neighbour,' he shouted in Serbian. They did so. It took a long time, and was a pitiable sight. Some young boys were crying. Many of the men shouted in defiance of the guards, who looked expectantly on, and of the cavalry, whose swords were drawn ready for the butchery. They blindfolded each other with strips torn from their waist-clothes, or whatever else they had. 'Now, kneel down!' came the harsh order. One by one the victims crouched to the ground. The captain turned again to his troopers. 'Start work!' was the order he gave.

"YELLS OF CRUEL DELIGHT."

"The infantry guards, still keeping in a circle to drive back any who might try to flee, drew off a little to give more room, and, passing through the intervals of their line, the Bulgar cavalry rode in among the kneeling throng of prisoners at a canter. With yells of cruel delight they pushed to and fro, slashing and thrusting at their unarmed victims. Some of the Serbians tried to seize the dripping sabre-blades with their hands. An arm slashed off at the shoulder would fall from their bodies. Others, tearing off the bandages that blindfolded them, attempted to unhorse their executioners, gripping them by the boot to throw them out of the saddle. But even you, though brave, could do nothing against so armed men. I could see the living trying to save themselves by crawling under the little heaps of the dead. Others rushed towards the line of infantry surrounding them, as if to break through to safety, but the foot-soldiers, intent on the sight of the deliberate bloodshed going on before their eyes, ran to meet them with

their bayonets and thrust them through and through with savage cries. 'We are doing this in charity,' shouted some of the Bulgarians. 'We have no bread to feed you, so if we spared you it would be to die of hunger.' The massacre went on for half an hour. At the end of that time there was little left to kill, and the troopers were tired of cutting and thrusting. A few of them dismounted and, sword in hand, walked here and there among the bleeding groups of dead, pricking them to see if any still lived. Some, though badly wounded, were still alive, but the Bulgarian captain gave no time for all to be finished off, and at his orders the whole pile of murdered prisoners, whether breathing or extinct, were pushed by the infantry into the grave dug earlier in the afternoon, and earth shovelled at once on top of them." *

With reference to this, well-founded uneasiness seems to have been aroused in Sofia by accounts of the brutalities perpetrated by the troops in the occupied territory. I quote from two remarkably frank speeches delivered in the *Sobranje* on February 29th, 1916. M. Malinoff, leader of the Opposition, said :

"We demand that the Bulgarian Government shall carefully avoid any repressive measures against the population of the Serbian territory now occupied by our troops, in order that we may be free from the reproaches of brutal cruelty levelled against the Germans in all the countries which they have invaded."

Further, M. Sakisoff, leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, voices his apprehension thus : "It would be folly to excite the enmity of the whole Serbian race by cruelty to the Serbians of Macedonia, because Serbia is not permanently destroyed, and the order of things now established in the Balkans may not last for ever."

It is to be hoped that these are the expressions of genuine convictions which may serve to mitigate some of the usual horrors incidental to Bulgarian warfare and their occupation of an enemy's country.†

* *The Standard*, February 15th, 1916.

† Unfortunately this has not been the case, and during the year 1917 the brutal tactics and savagery displayed by the Bulgars against the Serbs and Roumanians in the occupied territories was inexcessibly revolting, and the sheer ferocity and diabolical inhumanity has surpassed anything the ancient Hun or Turk could teach him.

IX.

PLAVNA TO THE DANUBE.

IN Bulgaria, as in Spain, the best trains seem to start either just before cock-crow or immediately after, and it was at what seemed an unearthly hour of the night that we were awakened by a resounding knock on the door the morning we left Sofia for Rustchuk *en route* for Roumania. The sturdy German maid announced that it was 5.30, and deposited a small tin pannikin of hot water within the door, wholly inadequate for the needs of a well-washed Briton. We crept from our warm beds very reluctantly, and silently and rather sickily attacked the preparations for our departure, until the advent of coffee and rolls put a more cheerful aspect on affairs.

It was a cold, grey morning as we drove to the station, but already Sofia was well awake—the tram-cars running, and numbers of country people in their sheepskin coats and fur caps coming into the town for their day's business, or to sell their produce.

Colonel Du Cane and Dimitri met us at the station, and we managed to secure two compartments in the corridor train, and disposed our luggage all over the seats in order to retain them! How typically British this is! No other nation displays the same eagerness to monopolize the entire compartment in solitary dignity as the Englishman.

I feel sure it is largely due to his conservative feeling in this respect that we have so few corridor trains in England, and that the old-fashioned detached compartment still maintains its popularity. For, with their lack of convenience, and the lurking dread that haunts so many a timid traveller, who fears the intrusion of an undesirable if not criminal fellow-passenger, travelling in England is often a penance and rarely a comfort. The rates are higher than

in America or on the Continent and the comfort and convenience often less. But the rather stolid Bulgarian train-guard was fully cognizant of our companion's diplomatic status and did his best to secure our comfort.

It was a contrast to an experience we once had in Mexico city. After a charming good-bye dinner given us by a well-known railway magnate there, we left for the station to catch the eleven o'clock train northwards to Arizona, our host accompanying us. While W. G. checked the baggage I walked up the platform with our friend, looking for the number of my *salon-lit* car, outside each of which an attendant was stationed.

When I found the car I was in search of, I handed my paper to an attendant, a big, insolent-looking darkie, who was standing by, and asked him where the conductor of our car was.

With the supreme indifference and assured insolence of the American darkie car-attendant, he answered—as he spat into the railway track—"He ain't receivin' yet!" Our friend, I need hardly say, made things lively for a bit.

Our way to Rustchuk, and thence over the Danube to Roumania, lay through Northern Bulgaria by the Isker Pass, which cuts the Balkans here. In employing the word "Balkans," I have used it in its widest sense, including in it not only the actual Balkan range, that runs from the north-west through Bulgaria, but all the other spurs and hills that run south of the great broad-bosomed Danube to the salt-edged limits of the Black Sea. On the northern side of the Isker Pass lies historic Plevna, and we looked forward with interest to seeing the battlefields, even though it would necessarily be but a bird's-eye view, for we did not intend to stop there.

Primitive, picturesque Plevna boasts but a cabaret or glorified khan in which to house the traveller, and the few strangers that halt here are commercial men and officers of various armies interested in studying the great battlefields.

On either side of the narrow gorge the rocks and cliffs were of all shades of red, brown, yellow and violet, and the river, tumbling and swirling at a great pace, was also yellow, flecked with foam.

We soon left the plain that entered the defile of the Isker. The railway here is a fine piece of engineering work, and we

crept cautiously along, the engine panting with throbbing heart-beats as it slowly climbed the steep grade, sometimes lost to view, and then, as if in a leap, returning. Here and there goatherds' thatched cottages were to be seen—very poor and very picturesque they looked, perched like hay-ricks on the mountain slope. Big, rough-coated sheep-dogs and children rated beside the train, the dogs yelping for crusts to be thrown them, which they cleverly caught, and the children claspouring with dirty little outstretched hands for "stetink"—about a centime in value.

The poverty of the country people in these hills is often great. There is but little pasture for a cow, and the milk of their goats, potatoes, a coarse bread and a thin soup made of garlic supply their daily needs. The children carry a hunk of black bread and cold potatoes on their long tramp to school, if indeed they are not too isolated to do so, and this is all they get till their return in the evening, when garlic soup or a cup of warm goat's milk comprises the supper of the little ones. They are religious, but also deeply superstitious, and their fables are generally of the malignant type—*more prone to bestow evil than good.*

As we rounded a pass a dip in the hills disclosed a more sheltered little valley, and we saw a shepherd guarding his flock; always a picturesque sight, even on our own Cumberland or Devonshire moors, it seems to me doubly so in these more lonely hills and grass-lands of the East. The solitary figure, with his flock around him, was enveloped in an enormous sheepskin coat and huge fur cap, for winter had barely left these desolate heights.

The flute or the bagpipe are generally the companion of the lonely Bulgar of the hills or great plains, the flute especially, and the shepherd finds solace and companionship during many a crepuscular hour, amid a solitude that is almost unbearable, in the plaintive strains that he woees from his "honey-sweet." His airs are always melancholy, tinged by the slow reticence of the Bulgarian nature—a brooding, uncommunicative people.

As we descended the pass on the northern slope the sun came out shyly, warming the dark depths below, and casting a soft radiance over the chill austerity of the snowy peaks.

We saw many eagles, and on one big rock as many as seven were counted. It is to these lonely parts that the

wilder, *ferest* game of Europe have retired, before the destructive forces of civilization. The bear, the wolf, boar, chamois, and eagle have here found their home.

Emerging from the gorge, we passed the peaceful valley where the vast fields of fragrant rose-trees furnish the delicate and costly attar of roses. The scent of these trees in the summer-time is so wonderful, and the perfume made from them so penetrating that—as at Grasse—it can be smelt from quite a distance.

The keen air had made us hungry, and thoughts of rose leaves being not sufficiently substantial, we inquired as to the promised restaurant car.

Imagine our dismay when we were told that the scheduled restaurant car was not attached to the train, and that unless some Moses arose to feed his poor, hungry people, our twelve hours' journey would have to be accomplished upon three small tablets of chocolate reposing in my dressing-bag, and ten Petit Beurre biscuits! For this was all a keen inspection of combined resources could muster, and looking at our stalwart company—both men over six feet in height—it did not promise a nourishing diet!

Vainly we regretted the hastily and half-eaten breakfast, and mourned for the rolls left untasted and the second cup of coffee undrunk! But the old adage, "A merry heart goes all the way, a sad one tires in an hour, oh!" is the motto inscribed on my travelling standard, and I always unfurl it and let it float out proudly to the breeze, to inspire and encourage me when difficulties big or little arise.

And our Moses, as it turned out, was not far off! He was sitting contentedly in the second-class car adjoining us, in the person of the faithful and resourceful Dimitri—our guide, interpreter and *valeur à tout faire* of many an expedition. Whenever the train stopped we could see "Moses" dashing for the restaurant and, failing such an institution, the booking-office! He drew many a blank, but finally about two o'clock a rather bigger place was reached, and he appeared, emerging triumphantly from the restaurant with some cups of broth and three oranges. The broth looked like a grey Scotch mist with a yellow sun endeavouring to break through it, and nothing but hunger would have made me enterprising enough to sample it. It was made of millet, liver and water, and the yellow sun was rather

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

crude oil floating in the centre, but it was hot, and filled up an empty corner.

My wanderings have introduced me to many queer things in far-off lands—cuttle-fish and lagoon soup in a poor gondolier's eating-house in Venice, sea-slugs, dyed seaweed and raw fish in a Japanese tea-house, "poi" in far-away beautiful Honolulu, pulque and tortilla in a Mexican hacienda, and some terribly ill-flavoured messes in a Tyrolean farmhouse—but China—still to be visited—holds, I believe, the blue ribbon for weird impossible dishes.

There it is an insult to offer a fresh egg to you, and the "honourable it" must be from ten to twenty-five years old, and in a condition like black marmalade before it is deemed up to the standard of one's palate; while an entrée esteemed worthy of attention is made of cats' eyes—not the gems—but those of poor Tom whose ghost flits mournfully over the tiles yowling out his sightless despair. A rich sauce accompanies this dish, and preference is given to black cats' eyes.

Of course we have "bulls' eyes" in England, but happy Sunday memories of my youth bids me refrain from scoffing. We were very much amused by the insistent ministrations of the female attendant on board the train, whose *office* seemed to be that of the housemaid. Apparently it is the custom for one to travel on the principal trains, and she spends her time dusting at repeated intervals the corridor walls, windows of the compartments, and small baggage, and even the shoes and lower garments came in for energetic attention from her whisk.

She made her rounds every hour, and each visit only increased her determined intention to dust us more completely, and we had finally to summon Dimitri and laughingly tell her that, for once in a way, the English preferred to be dirty, and would wait for the final dusting process till the end of the journey was in sight.

We were now on the low ground around Plevna, and our speculations regarding our rations for the day and past experiences were put aside as we gazed on the plains on which such bloody battles between the Turkish and Russian forces took place, and where that gallant general, Osman Pasha, after an heroic defence of the town lasting four months, had

to yield up his sword to the conquering Russian. Between thirty and forty thousand men, as well as seventy guns, were captured.

We could see in the distance the monuments erected to the fallen, as well as the formation of the redoubts and earthworks, where so many brave sleep their last long sleep.

The sun had crept behind some clouds, and cast a shadow of grey gloom over the plain, where such thousands of warriors rest beneath the sod. It lent an added touch of realism to one's imagination in picturing the misery and carnage of war, combined with the horror of that bitter winter of blizzard and death.

Not far off lies the historic Shipka Pass. It was there in 1877 that those fierce conflicts took place in the depths of winter, and in the midst of terrific cold and blinding snow-storms, that held all Eastern Europe in breathless suspense, and marked the beginning of a new era of independence and progress for Roumania, who had come to the aid of Russia with such triumphant results.

The difficulties encountered by the Russians in crossing the Balkans were heart-rending—Nature sternly contesting every inch of the way. The mountains were coated with ice, and deep snow-drifts swallowed up their artillery, while hundreds of poor fellows perished in the awful cold and desperate struggle.

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From here on to Rustchuk our way lay through rich well-cultivated plains, watered by the broad Yantra river. Mills and factories spoke for the growing activity of this part of the country.

About six o'clock we approached Rustchuk, and eagerly looked out for the first glimpse of the Danube, for we heard she was in tremendous flood, and indeed she looked like a great fjord with islands of trees dotted about vainly endeavouring to keep their heads out of the swirl of waters.

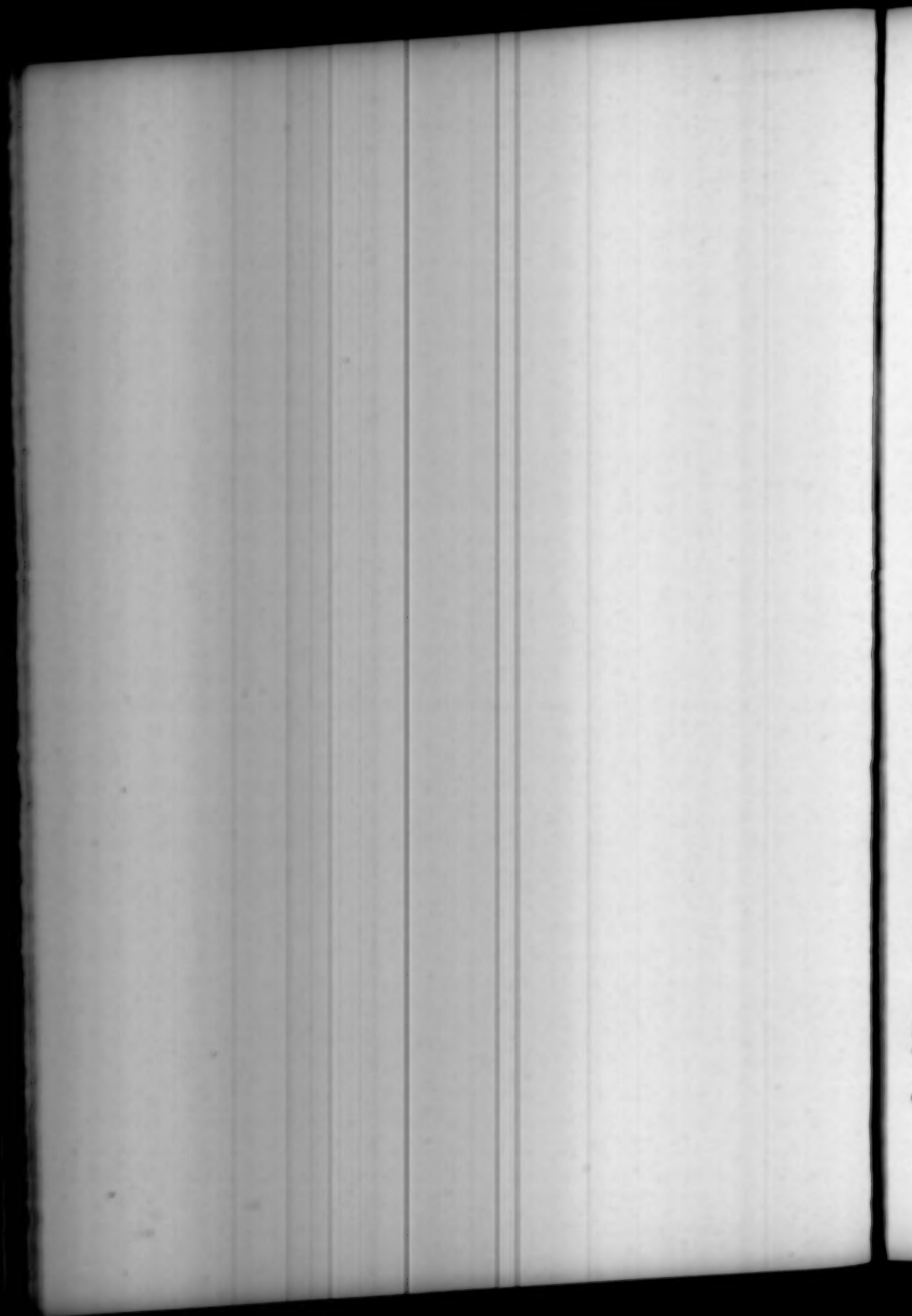
Rustchuk is a good-sized town of 30,000 inhabitants, holds a big garrison and is increasing yearly in importance. Although many modern buildings are growing up, there is still an Eastern look about it which redeems its ugliness. The old mosque and minarets, the scattered pink and white houses, some with brown wooden shutters and platforms, have a furtive aspect of Turkish seclusion, and

in the background lies the great dark ribbon of the Danube bordering the vast Roumanian plain.

Here we had to leave our good "Monsieur"—for in the hurried departure from Sofia his master had not got him a passport, and he was to stay here till Colonel Du Cane returned from Bucharest. He carried all our heterogeneous small luggage to the boat as if they were coffins, and looked such a wretched picture of melancholy and despair that his master, relenting, gave him a card to the Consul which we hoped would ensure him the permit necessary to come with us. He was off like a shot, and soon returned with his permit, the change of expression constituting a tableau of joy and delight which was most amusing, and his brown face at once assumed its broad proportions of contented placidity.

The crossing from Rutchuk to Giurgevo is made in very good little steam-boats taking only a quarter of an hour. Once over and on Roumanian soil, our "laissez passers" acted in the usual magical way, and the polite, neat little officers of the douane—so like Frenchmen—handed us to the train with much civility.

ROUMANIA.



X.

THE CITY OF PLEASURE AND LIGHT.

IT is extraordinary what changes in type and characteristics a thin strip of water will make. It is like crossing from England into France here. The stalwart, burly Bulgarian—slow and laconic in speech—on one side of the Danube, and the vivacious, alert, Latin-looking Roumanian on the other. It affords an admirable illustration of the great geographical principle that no boundaries are so efficacious in preserving national types as natural boundaries.

It was a bright sunny evening as we rolled on to Bucharest, past the well-cultivated farmlands that lie on the broad plain of the Danube. At one of the stations the *chef de gare* brought us a message from M. Také Jonescu, the able and brilliant Roumanian statesman, to say he would meet us on our arrival at Bucharest, and indeed when we rumbled into the big station his friendly face was smiling at us from the platform; his charming wife, who is an Englishwoman, was beside him with a cordial greeting for us.

The station was packed with a gay throng of curious loiterers watching the arrivals or speeding the departures. Many rendezvous seemed to have been arranged here for this hour, for it was late afternoon, when all Bucharest turns out, and the Roumanian has a keen *flair* for romantic adventure, and much flirtatious interest seemed to be directed at the women passengers and passers-by.

At the barrier a lively group of peasants had collected, many of them graceful and with dark laughing eyes. They greeted one clamorously, offering their flowers, fruit, cakes or embroidery for sale.

The "nuts," or youths of the city, were here too in great evidence: boys of eighteen and nineteen, slender and eager-

looking, swishing their canes, a cigarette at their lips and with roving eyes seeking the faces hither and thither.

My first night in Bucharest, indeed all those I spent at the Hôtel Boulevard, was of the sleepless order. The big square in which it stands seemed crowded enough by day, but at night it simply swarmed with people. Trams rattled and rung their bells. Droschies drove furiously over the stone roadways, taxis hooted and boomed, and the ceaseless tramp, tramp of feet and murmur of voices never died down till well after two-thirty in this "city of pleasure and light."

At five o'clock the country carts started their noisy procession, the oxen and horses being admonished with shrill cries of warning and encouragement, which rang through the air and penetrated one's tired, nervous brain with maddening insistence. The trams woke up again after their few hours' rest, and bells and clamour announced the day. How thankful we were to exchange these noisy nights for the quiet ones we passed when, after a few days' sleeplessness at the hotel, we went to stay with our hospitable friends, the Joneses, at their charming house!

"Bucuresti," as it is called among its inhabitants, means "City of Joy," and indeed it amply justifies its title, for it is one of the gayest and brightest capitals to be found anywhere. The principal streets are broad, well-paved and lined with gay shops, displaying all the latest Paris fashions. Brilliantly decorated cafés, purveyors of every kind of table delicacy, tempting confectionery, and fine book and picture shops lure the passer-by to spend, spend, spend! And indeed one needs to have a good fat purse here, for it is one of the most expensive of cities, and money trickles through one's fingers like water. Everything, except perhaps cabs, is exorbitantly dear, and the people, gay and cheerful, seem to pass their days and half their nights in enjoying life to the utmost. It was a great contrast to the other cities we had just been visiting—Vienna, Belgrade, Sofia and Constantinople—where little out-of-door night revelry is held; the streets are deserted and quiet by ten, and all seems asleep.

In Bucharest the streets are nearly as lively at night as in the daytime. The cafés, ablaze with gleaming lights, are crowded; cabs and carriages rattled through the streets,

carrying brilliantly dressed occupants from theatre or opera, to ball and reception, while a steady stream wended its way to supper at Capșa's or Enescu's. In fact, in its midnight vivacity, this city is no mean rival to Paris or London.

One of our friends had placed a delightful electric landaulette at our disposal during our visit here, an attention which we cordially appreciated, and we did all our sightseeing and round of gaieties in a most luxurious and comfortable manner.

The town is laid out for the most part in fine boulevards, after the French style, the principal one being the Calea Victoriei, which runs the whole length of the town, from the Dimbovitza Quay to the Chaussée or park. All the best shops, restaurants, the Government buildings, Palace and theatre, are in this thoroughfare, and its moving throng of carriages and streams of well-dressed people present at all hours a lively scene. The Carol I., Calea Elizabeth and Strada Lipicani are also fine streets, and it is in these that the wealthy Roumanian princes and aristocrats have built unto themselves magnificent palaces and town abodes of every style and description. They look very ornate, made of white or grey stone, their stately façades ornamented with good chisel work, and with broad carriage drives and elaborate black and gold railings in front.

The interiors are furnished with luxury, while many of them have charming gardens surrounding them. In fact, the number of shrubs, trees and gardens that are planted round the houses and palaces is one of the pleasantest features of the city.

In building, women are greatly employed, and though I've seen women in various countries do heavy field, farm or mine work, and also coal ships, it was the first time I had seen them employed as builders. They are all gypsies, and it is curious to see the sturdy types, with their short rough skirts well tucked up, showing their muscular brown legs, clambering up the ladders or scaffolding with pails of cement or loads of brick or stone on their backs.

We were standing watching them one morning when a jolly-faced, rotund girl about twenty started climbing a ladder, luckily with only a trowel and some rope in her hand, for she slipped half-way up and fell to the ground a tumbled mass. We ran forward, but she laughingly picked

herself up, disclaiming any injury, and, shaking herself like a dog after a bath, began twisting her garments into shape again, for they seemed to have been far more dislocated than she was. It reminded me of the story of the two Irish commercial travellers sleeping at a country inn which took fire during the night. It spread so quickly that they had only time to throw on a few garments. Pat in the darkness and hurry put on his trousers backside foremost. Letting themselves down by the window and safely on the ground, Dennis turned to Pat.

"Pat," says he, "are ye all right?"

"Faith," said Pat, "I had all right, but" (looking down at his trousers), "begorra, I must have got a terrible twist."

Some of the public buildings in Bucharest are imposing, handsome edifices, and the churches are often very richly decorated, the cathedral especially, in which lies the body of St. Demetrius in a glass case, enshrined in silver. In time of calamity or famine the sacred body is carried through the city, followed by a grand procession, headed by the archimandrite, the priests and the people.

It, like Basil of old, he doyleth or perchance carrieth elsewhere, other relics of Saints are brought forth on their march of supplication, which, I heard, rarely failed in securing its purpose.

But Bucharest is pre-eminently a modern city, and possesses few buildings of any antiquity or historic interest. Here and there one catches a glimpse of some old gateway, house or church that has successfully withstood the onslaught of the up-to-date architect and builder, but the general impression is that of a bright, amusing, noisy modern city.

Towards sundown, and between four and six in the afternoon, the *Chaussee* and *Calea Victoriei* present a gay spectacle, for this is the hour of the *fiévre*, the time consecrated to the pleasant stroll by the brightly-lit shops, the interest in the dark-eyed *Béghades* in their well-turned-out carriages, and the interchange of the latest *on dit* of scandal or intrigue.

In London at this hour the streets would be emptying and the big clubs would be thronged, but here in Bucharest, where there are few of those luxurious caravanserais, the

gay world streams happily along the boulevards, and a ceaseless activity appears to reign.

Everyone seems to be out of doors, driving, shopping, strolling, criticizing or appraising each other. The women, in the latest Paris fashions, are much in evidence, and display much coquetry and allure.

As in Vienna or Paris, a woman—unless she is homely in appearance, as the Yankees would say—does not walk much alone except in the more crowded shopping district and thoroughfares, for the Latin temperament of the Roumanian predisposes him to adventure and her to molestation.

Outside Capsa's, the smart restaurant, the throng is thickest, for it is the rendezvous of the fashionable world at this hour. Numbers of the officers of the Roumanian army, in their brilliant and varied uniforms, and many of the younger members of the Legations are to be seen here in the evening, and especially on Sundays, when the city is very gay.

Capsa's, apart from its mondaine aspect, has a very well-marked political significance, for like the Macedonian Club of Sofia, it has frequently been the scene where grave events and many a political *coup* has been conceived, discussed and projected.

Our Minister, Sir Conyngham Greene, who is now Ambassador in Japan, gave us a delightful supper there one night. The famous restaurant is run on French lines—the food excellent. The floor, tiled and bare, is covered with many closely-packed tables, and the usual rather garish wall decoration of mirrors, cherubs and gilt is quite French, and entirely different to the great supper restaurants of the "Savoy" and "Carlton," in London, where one rises from supper in a richly furnished and carpeted room, and adjourns to the luxurious divans and sofas of the great Palm Hall, with all their warmth and luxury of comfort.

Here one sits—dressed in *demi-toilette*—at the table where one has dined or supped, chatting and listening to the fine Trigane band until it is time to leave. The *chef d'orchestre*, a dark, sparkling-eyed man of gypsy strain, was a very fine violinist, and led his band with wonderful abandon and go. He made a special point of playing to us as complete a selection of the beautiful Roumanian melodies

as possible, and was delighted with our enjoyment and appreciation of his music.

At Capșa's, and in the social world, one is impressed by the display of wealth and prosperity of the upper classes. Their jewels and toilettes at the opera and theatre vie with those one is accustomed to see in Paris.

At the National Theatre operas and the drama alternate one with another. The theatre is a handsome building with tiers of boxes and a large parquet, where the officers congregate and pay rounds of visits to their friends in the boxes during the long waits between the acts.

The *entr'actes* were frequent, and interminable in their length, and it seems these protracted intervals are expressly spun out, as the Roumanians enjoy lengthy entertainments and do not care to go home till the "wee sma' hours." I confess I could hardly stifle my yawns as the night advanced, but, then, I had spent a very strenuous day sitting in sight-seeing, a luncheon and afternoon party, whereas the Roumanian ladies take their day very leisurely and save themselves for the evening's entertainment.

The cabs, or "birjas," are delightful: well-appointed and moderate in price, and are drawn by good teams of horses, driven generally by Russian coachmen. The best do not have numbers, and are so well turned out that it is difficult to distinguish them from the private carriages.

The drivers wear long, padded, dark-blue velvet coats, the bodice fitting like a jersey, while the skirt to which it is attached is so ample in its fullness that it gives them a most imposing and portly appearance. On their head they wear the high round cap of astrakhan, and their waists, of aldermanic proportions, are girt with a bright red sash.

One feels most truly honourable driving behind these Lord Mayor-like Johns, and the pace they go at is distinctly exciting. They whirl round the street corners as if they were Tam o' Shanter with the devil at his tail, emitting a wild Indian kind of yell with all the vigour of their burly frames, scattering the pedestrians like chickens. When you want to guide them you give a tug to the red sash ends and point dramatically in the desired direction—at least that is the way for those who don't speak Roumanian, and, I noticed, for a number of the natives too! Most of them

are refugees from Russia and belong to the Skoptsi sect, with queer rites and customs.

They have a queer little restaurant, one of the oldest houses in the city, that they frequent, and one wondered that such a small low old house could accommodate so many of their burly forms. Close to this is the square where a fine bronze statue is erected illustrating the well-known legend of the wolf suckling the traditional founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, for the Roumanians like to emphasize the fact of their Roman ancestry. The friend who drove me to see it had never heard the amusing story of the raw Yankee paying his first visit to Europe, and who was asked, while in Rome, what he considered was the finest statue there. Brother Jonathan, who was suffering from a surfeit of culture in which art, music, etc., had got very mixed up, drawled out, "Waal, I guess the wolf at the Capitol suckling Romeo and Juliet."

Arranged round the base of the statue were a delightful group of gypsies, pedlars and flower-sellers. The flower-girls had big flat baskets filled with spring blooms and branches of cherry and almond blossom. Their bright bodices, swarthy skins, glowing eyes and brilliant scarves twisted in their blue-black hair made a vivid splash of colour against the grey stone pedestal of the statue. The men were making shoes—a cloth on the ground, a bag of tools, a block of wood and some leather seemed to be all they required.

The general effect of the town is distinctly Western. The broad boulevards, fine shops and buildings, handsomely turned-out carriages, and streams of well-dressed people show little touch of the East. But turn a corner, and dip behind one of the gay thoroughfares, and one finds oneself plunged in a narrow network of older, meaner streets, where the busy working hum of lower-class life and the shrill cries of hawkers are heard. Little dingy shops line the road, picturesque vendors of food and fruit pronounce their wares in the musical Latin tongue. A fish-seller, in his baggy white trousers, shirt and sandals, carries aloft his flat rush basket laden with fish from the Black Sea, the big shining knife and scales with which he slashes and quarters and weighs hanging around his neck. At the corner stands a well-built, lithe fellow, holding a tall wooden stand with

branches on either side upon which are strung thin rings of bread, about the size of a turbotine, crisp, brown and sprinkled with millet or caraway seeds. Sitting on a stool near him is a comely girl with a roguish "come hither" look in her eyes, and many a quip and flirtatious jest for the male passer-by who stops to purchase the little white bowls of yoghurt, or sour milk—of the consistency of cheese—which are laid out among some green leaves on the tray before her.

Opposite is the purveyor of Turkish delight, shrilly voicing his ware to the passers-by; he is a dark romantic-looking man of about twenty-five, with the oval face, regular features and touch of melancholy in his eyes so characteristic of the Roumanian peasant. But in spite of the fact that he is a peasant, with very simple bucolic tastes, there is nevertheless an air of mystery about him suggestive of the melancholy passion of a Romeo. He is an attractive-looking figure, dressed in long close-fitting white linen trousers, worn under a loose full-skirted shirt, sashed with red, and a short sleeveless blue coat brightly embroidered. His tray, which he carries slung round his neck, is piled high with slabs of the sweet pink and white stuff powdered with fine sugar; by his side is the big wooden jug of water, gleaming with its bright brass mountings. I never could resist buying some of the sweetmeat, it looked so nice and clean and tempting, but I drew the line at the customary rite of drinking a glass of water from his bright pitcher.

A curious trace of the oriental influence is still found in some of the old streets or bazaars, as they might almost be called, where the custom still exists of all the shops selling the same objects; such as the street where one finds nothing but hat-shops, another for saddlery and shoes, and another for brass or copper ware.

In the heart of the older part of the city lies the "Hala vechiturilor," or the market of old things, where one can pick up, as at the famous rag market in Rome, all sorts of interesting bric-à-brac—lost, though principally stolen or strayed—china, silver curios, fine lace-trimmed house-linen, brocades, weapons, embroideries and clothes, presided over by oily, black-ringed, hook-nosed people, redolent of Bouquet Juif.

Near it are funny, dark, little old houses, their walls

washed in faint, weather-beaten tones of grey, brown, pink or blue. Most of them have courtyards and big brown wooden verandahs running round the house, where one sees much of the family life proceeding.

On sunny days the family bedding is also put out to air here. This is a custom generally observed in most of the European countries, and is one which might be followed with advantage in England, where the frowsy, unaired bedding of the poorer classes is unhealthy and objectionable.

Down in the older and narrower streets there is a busy hum and murmur of traffic. Hawkers in picturesque dress, white or buff, with red or blue vests, are shouting their wares. Comely country-women are holding trays laden with the pretty peasant work they offer for sale—blouses, aprons, scarves, white and blue and white and red, some mixed with black, and all lavishly worked with sequins, and at such moderate prices that my purse was soon emptied and my already overflowing trunks groaned anew and, somewhat like the camel, stubbornly resisted our efforts to load up.

The country comes right up to the edge of the town, and there are no suburbs, so one sees many a bucolic scene in the city. Up the middle of the old streets come, creaking and groaning, long wooden waggons piled high with firewood, drawn by cream-coloured oxen who stagger in an inebriated-looking fashion under the dead weight of their load. For coal is very dear here, costing £4 a ton, and it is curious to see the enormous stacks of brush and firewood banked up against the houses, some of the stacks being nearly as tall as the house!

Pattering behind come a herd of sheep, with a few sleepy-eyed donkeys ambling amongst them and bearing market produce in huge panniers. At the tail-end of the flock squeak and grunt several of the long-legged, thin, ridge-backed pigs, so skittish, inquisitive and venturesome in exploiting side alleys, archways and gutters for scraps of food, and occupying all the herdsmen's attention, for he is kept perpetually dashing after one or the other on trespass bent, and swishing them into line again with his stick, amid protesting grunts.

They have lots of a Puck-like character, these ugly but lively pigs of Eastern Europe, and are always amusing to watch in their ungainly tricks, their endeavours to satisfy a

voracious appetite that is never satisfied, their quarrels with each other, and their crossness inquisitiveness. They are so different to the phlegmatic members of fat that we lured in England, who only grunt and sleep and gorge, for a predestined future of hams and sausages.

Wandering through the narrow streets, we came into a square where a small local market was proceeding. Little booths selling food were pitched in the centre, and were doing a brisk business with the peasants and poorer townfolk.

One booth was laden with long strings of small, rather exulting black sausages, highly flavoured with garlic. The purchaser cut off as many as he liked, dipped them into a bowl of thick red sauce with capers in it, and either ate them there and then, or put them into a can which he produced, and into which some of the sauce was poured.

Another stall had steaming puddings with a kind of *patou-feu* with dumplings of maize in it. A stout matronly peasant was patronizing the hot brew, which she drank from a mug in one hand, while holding in the other arm her baby, a red-faced mite done up tightly, just like a brown-paper parcel. She kept her weather eye, however, on the little flock of turkeys she had brought into market, and the branch she swished them to order with was tucked for the moment under her arm beside the baby while she drank; she told us she had walked a longish distance, and had only had a bowl of maize porridge at five that morning, and it was then twelve o'clock. Her sturdy figure was clad in a full homespun skirt, with a brightly embroidered apron hanging both back and front.

Many of the shops have gaily-painted signs hanging over their doors. Some have wild beasts, others queer-looking castles or grotesque figures of dwarfs or giants, or elaborately fanciful imitations of such things as a key and padlock, or a samovar, which, however, bear no relation whatever to the goods sold within.

Butchers' shops are not allowed in Bucharest, and the meat is sold in a closed-in little market of its own, kept immaculately clean. One is spared the horrible sight of our big, windowless butchers' shops in London, with the terrible display of dead meat, on which all the dust and germs from the street can settle.

The older part of Bucharest is squalid perhaps, but it is picturesque, and more truly a glimpse of the real people than is to be seen in the newer parts of the town.

Suddenly a gay burst of music clashes out, and quickly turning a corner into a wider street, we are just in time to see an infantry regiment, the "Dorobantzi," pass on their way back to barracks from a route march. The men are lithe, well-set-up fellows, with an eager, alert look about figure and face, very different to the rather sullen expression and stodgy build of the Bulgar.

Struck in the fur cap, the "caciusa," that they wear, is a turkey's feather, which is proudly worn by the regiment in memory of the gallantry displayed by it in the battles of the Russo-Turkish War, when Roumania's army fought side by side with the armies of the great White Tzar.

Unlike Sofia and the other Balkan capitals, one sees fewer people in their charming national dress about the bigger, more modern streets, unless it be market-day or the outskirts of the town.

At Sinala, however, both the Queen Dowager and Queen Marie wear the dress, endeavouring by their example to prevent its falling into disuse, and at the same time encouraging the art of embroidery, the wearing of which so adorns the costume of the peasantry.

It is certainly one of the prettiest and most picturesque of the many national costumes seen by us on our various "globe-trottings," and the original inventor has, with true artistic intuition and an almost feminine instinct, designed this lovely dress so as to show off the many beautiful points of his country-women to the utmost advantage. The *fête* dress of the peasant woman consists of a loose white cotton *crêpe* chemise, handsomely worked in blue, red and black, which falls from neck to heels. A petticoat called "*fota*," or still more often a double apron in red and black, which hangs in two parts, one to the front and one to the back, and richly embroidered, is worn. This is held in place by a sash, and the hair is worn in two long plaits, or rolled simply round the head. For the married a curious tiara made of wrought iron or wood, called the "*concia*," is worn, and from this hangs a long gauze veil.

In the country one will often see the embroidered blouses, scarves, or aprons worked by the peasants hanging on lines

attached to poles in their little gardens, to attract the attention of a purchaser, or the women will sit by the roadside with them laid out on a basket or tray to tempt the passer-by.

The men wear white pantaloons, a long embroidered shirt, hanging over them, sash and high cap—in hill districts they wear a round felt hat, like the peasant of Brittany. A short saque coat of hide, very handsomely embroidered in designs of red and black, is hung on their shoulders, and in winter the heavy "carica" of sheepskin, with its long felt, makes the owner look like a woolly bear. Some also wear in winter a long crimson overcoat handsomely embroidered in gold, and all the male peasantry wear the "opanka" or raw-hide sandal, used all over Eastern Europe.

In the dress of ceremony worn by the women of the aristocracy in the past, soft lines of drapery cling gracefully to their slender upright figures. The head is bare, allowing the hair to be wreathed, coiled or braided, as their looks or fancy dictates, affording ample opportunity for the instinctive coquetry of the sex. The lovely robe of rich brocade, the handsome sash of divers colours, and the brilliant embroidery glittering with tiny delicate sequins that adorn the soft crepe bodice complete an ideally beautiful dress.

No wonder it has been revived and is worn constantly by the Queen and many of the Roumanian ladies in their country homes, for it is as comfortable to wear as it is beautiful to look at, and by their example they encourage the country people also to wear it.

The costume of the men resembles in an extraordinary degree the dress of the Dacian captives on Trajan's column in Rome, and is without doubt little changed since those days.

Amongst the peasantry, as well as the *bourgeoisie* of the capital, one finds a fairly high standard of good looks. The women are handsome, especially those of the upper classes. Of a distinctly Italian type, medium height, and of an "opulent physique," their fine shoulders, smooth and shapely, rival a Frenchwoman's in beauty of line. Their skins are pale, and contrast effectively with their dark hair and eyes. Here and there one sees a russet or blonde type, exceptions, however, which only prove the rule.

Generally speaking, they are not very religious, although they observe the customary fast-days of their church with

due formality. They are easy-going and tolerant in their opinions. Physically they are somewhat indolent, but this is counterbalanced by a certain vivacity of temperament which, given the stimulus, can incite to strenuous and fine endeavour.

The contradictions of their nature, if any, may be ascribed to a somewhat complex national character, with its mixture of Latin and Oriental influence and its sprinkling of Greek culture. It is a curious paradox that this essentially Latin people should have selected for their ruler a German Prince, instead of one chosen from nations who, one might imagine, were more in natural sympathy with the Roumanian temperament.

In disposition they are ardent and impulsive, and are very attractive in their vivacity and desire to charm. Fond of admiration, and successful in securing it, they seem to possess an unlimited capacity for amusement and gaiety, which imparts a sense of exhilaration to the more cold-blooded Northerner, who generally takes his pleasures more seriously.

They are witty, very intelligent, and delightfully charming in their hospitality and courtesy, and of the various peoples I have met, one of the most sympathetic.

Their flirtations are many and varied, and the old Scotch saying, "He that has a bonny wife needs more than two eyes," is very applicable to the husbands of Bucharest. Their men are passionate and jealous, and they often give them great cause for the display of these primitive but none the less very human emotions, for the man who cannot excite or transport himself over a great affection is but a poor cardboard creature, and when jealousy dies, love is spanning its shroud.

Divorce is frequent, but those divorced are not placed without the pale, as in other countries, and a wife will meet her former husband with much equanimity, not to say coquetry. The unmarried girls are brought up as strictly as in France.

The men are of medium height, well-proportioned, and with slender hands and feet, oval face, olive skin and dark bright eyes characteristic of their Latin blood; their manners are very charming, attentive and courteous in the extreme. They combine great energy in business and politics with a keen pursuit of pleasure—for they are a stirring, active

nation—a combination of qualities that is rather surprising when one realizes their close proximity to the languorous Orient.

They are as inveterate gamblers as the Russians. Very high play prevails at the Jockey Club, and enormous sums of money are lost and won daily at haccarat, bridge, and over wild wagers.

They are, with some exceptions, not sportsmen in our sense of the word, although there is very good shooting and plenty of game to be found in the Carpathians—red and roe deer, wild bear, chamois, and elsewhere bustard, partridge, hare. But the gay life of the city attracts the younger men, and only a few live at their country places for more than a month or so in the summer.

Some of them have pet bears which their gamekeepers have tamed. The Told Jeneuen had one at their country place, and it was an amusing sight to see the bear waddling down every morning just like a huge ungainly sheep-dog to the out-houses at the bottom of the hill, where she was given the sack of coals necessary for use in the kitchen during the day. She shouldered it at once, and brought it up to the kitchen door, where she was always given sugar, cake or some fruit. Her son, a little cub, used to walk round the garden holding the footman's hand in quite a gentlemanly fashion. Prince Cantacuzine also had a very fine full-grown bear, who did many tricks and drank his pint of thin wine on Saturday night with all the zest of a British navy!

In domestic management, I should say that the Roumanian women were not so accomplished as the French or Austrian, but this is largely due to the lack of good servants, for here, as elsewhere, this question, owing to the advance in education, has become acute. Unfortunately the notion prevails that service under the Government is the highest, no matter in however so humble a capacity. The lower middle-classes labour under the delusion that the services of the soil, or any menial work, is beneath them, whence it follows that there exists amongst them a vast amount of ill-concealed discontent and dissatisfaction with their lot.

The servants are generally German or Hungarian, and morality is not a conspicuous virtue. They do not wear cap, apron, or any kind of a uniform dress as is done in England, and though good workers in their way, are often

untidily in loose, low-necked blouses when at work in the morning. In the afternoon they wear smarter blouses and put a bow in their hair.

Their wages seemed to me very moderate. Cooks get from £18 to £26, parlour and house maids £10 to £20. In fact this struck me as the only cheap thing in Bucharest, for everything else seemed extremely high, and the prices at the hotels, shops and restaurants were exorbitant.

The food is, however, of the very best, and the cooking excellent. Much of the former—such as poultry, meat, butter—comes direct from Paris, and the chefs in the private houses and restaurants are *cordons bleus* from that high temple of gastronomic art. Some of the Roumanian dishes were very good; their "dulchastas," or sweet things, were delicious, and carp, salmon and caviare abundant and excellent and cheap.

During our visit to Monsieur Také Jonescu's house we rejoiced in the utmost comfort and luxury, for his wife is an Englishwoman, and though her house is run on Roumanian lines, it has the added comforts and *petits soins* of English life.

They entertained us delightfully with luncheons, dinners, and a big evening reception followed by a dance, which was very enjoyable.

The drawing-rooms, which opened wide in French fashion on to the big hall, presented a charming scene with the many gay uniforms of the officers, the well-dressed, lively women, and all the interesting personnel of the diplomatic and political world. A famous Tzigane band played, and in the intervals between the dances performed some of the beautiful national melodies for our benefit.

As a rule the Roumanian houses are well and handsomely furnished, but, like those of the Italian and French, do not convey to one the sense of cosy home comfort that we like to have in England, the bric-à-brac, numerous bibelots, luxurious sofas and corners, the intimate "lived-in" look that shows at once the personality of the châtelaine.

French is generally spoken both in the shops and society, and the sons and daughters of the wealthy people are all sent to Paris for their education, though there are two fine universities, one at Bucharest and the other at Jassy, a country town to the north and the capital of Moldavia.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

Their mode of life, as well as their dresses, cuisine, etc., is distinctly French, and this has earned for Bucharest the title of the "Paris of the East." The English language, which is so rapidly superseding French as the medium of international intercourse, is known and spoken when necessary by the upper classes of the country. Indeed, the children are lisping English before they know their own tongue, for in many families that coveted domestic treasure, the English nurse, is installed, and at the races, which are held on Sundays, all the jockeys are English.

In the matter of their surnames the majority end in the syllable "co" or "escu," which signifies "the descendant of," and is equivalent to the Bulgarian "off" or the "vitch" of Serbia. For example, Petrescu, which means in Roumania the descendant of Peter, would be Petroff in Bulgaria, and in Serbia and Russia, Petrovitch.

The Roumanian climate is a trying one. In winter the snow lies deep and long, and icy winds from Russia blow over the steppes and plains with glacial severity. In March the *débacle* begins: the Danube swells, and rising from her great river-bed, overwhelms the plains. The spring is glorious, but all too short, for in May the hot weather arrives, and lasts till September, and everyone who can leaves the city for his country home or the gay foreign spas of Austria, Belgium or France.

In May the Court moves to Sinaia, where the late King Carol built a fine country-seat, "Castel Pelesch," which his queen, the late "Catharine Sylva," beautified exceedingly. Here King Ferdinand and Queen Marie, with their family, spend some of the happiest hours of the year, for they are all devoted to country life and sport; and shooting, motoring, riding, and picnicking among the surrounding woods and mountains can be indulged in to their hearts' content.

In the Castle grounds the Queen has had an enchanting nest built up in the trees, and the branches shade and surround it like a bower. Dressed in the picturesque national dress she and her children so often wear, many a cool hour is spent there during the long hot days of summer.

Close by is the old monastery founded by Michael Cantacuzene in the fifteenth century, but it has been so completely restored and rebuilt, that little of the original

structure remains. All around on the hills and slopes the wealthy aristocrats have built villas, and it is a veritable colony of mondaine amusement and gaiety during the summer.

Sinaia is only a few hours' run by motor from Bucharest, and it is surprising to note the quick transformation from the hot, dusty plain and city, up to the cool beauty and calm of these mountain regions, in so short a time. It is undoubtedly one of the beauty spots of Eastern Europe, with its lakes and valleys knee-deep in wild flowers and watered by countless little streams, and its hills covered with pine and oak.

The roads are excellent for motoring and driving, and any number of lovely bridle-paths intersect the woods, hills and valleys for those who care to ride.

One comes across many an enchanting picture of peasant life in these rural regions. The big, soft-eyed, dun-coloured oxen with wide-spread horns, drawing along carts scarcely different from the early Roman days. The slender, dark-eyed peasants, in the costume which has hardly varied in two thousand years. The men with breeches, long embroidered shirt, big soft hats and short gay jackets, tossing or loading their hay.

The women—the most beautiful in Eastern Europe—can be seen with their distaffs, watching the herds in the lush green meadows, drawing the water from the long, lever-worked wells, or washing down by the stream.

Towards sunset the grave, slow-moving oxen are unyoked from the chariot-looking cart, and wander homewards unattended, or wait patiently outside the stable doors, occasionally butting them with their horns for admittance.

The laughing, romping children have been drawn indoors, the squealing, frolicsome pigs, so like the wild boar, with upstanding ridge of hair down their backs, have snuggled down into the straw, and the geese, the last loiterers of all, show a shadowy white line over the darkening road as they waddle slowly home.

Over all, the still beauty of the dying day falls gently. The dark line of the Carpathians cuts clear against the vivid sky. The deep purple of the forest-clothed gorges, the sombre gloom of the rocky ravines, and the smooth faint green of the meadows, all merge softly into the darkening night.

XI.

RURAL ROMANIA.

THE Roumanians are very proud of their descent from Trajan, who led his colonists to their country more than eighteen centuries ago. Their language, which is a subject of much interest, is principally derived from these early Roman ancestors, who came for the most part from Northern Italy, and their speech, according to Uricid, was a Latin no longer that of Rome, but a primitive and already corrupt dialect. Many of their superstitions and rites are also traceable to the same source, and indeed thunder is still called by the country people Trajan's voice! Another term, that of "Boyard"—a goldsmith's title dating from the fifteenth century—was undoubtedly derived from "Boier," a name borne by the Roman colonists of the eighth century, who used to go to battle in chariots harnessed to oxen, the driver of every chariot being called a Boier—an adaptation, probably, of *Boia heros*.

Many people ignorant of the eastern side of Europe and its political aspects, seem disposed to place Roumania in the same category as the other Balkan States. In this they are entirely wrong. The Serbians and Bulgars are Slavonic, and since the destruction of their ancient empires and nobility, have been purely agricultural peoples, long under the suzerainty of Turkey.

The Roumanian people, on the other hand, are of Latin origin, with a well-defined aristocracy, and class distinctions prevail in that country to an extent unknown in the others; the great bulk of the nation, however, is composed of peasantry, who are shepherds and agriculturists like those in the neighbouring States. Their lives are simple, hard, a daily toil that gives but scant return. Inured to fatigue and a diet that is Spartan in its meagreness, they are,

notwithstanding this, a hardy, virile race, endowed with fine qualities of resistance and persistence.

Their distractions are few, and unremitting toil is the usual sum of their days. In the evenings the men meet round the inn door to discuss their simple interests—the women, spinning, gather their children round the hearth and gossip or relate some of the wonderful stories or legends which so abound in Roumania. On fete days they join hands in an enormous circle and in their vivid white garments and embroideries dance the "hora," but after their brief day of fete and illness their festal clothes are put aside, and the ones of rude labour in the fields and house are donned.

It is a familiar sight to see the family—father, mother and four or five children—starting in the morning for the day's work in the fields, for the good mother who bears the children, runs the house and spins for the family, shares also in the labour of her man, and may often be seen ploughing a furrow. In front walks the man, his hoe or rake on his shoulder, behind trudges the patient wife with a pack on her back containing the food for the long twelve-hours' day, the distaff and old umbrella strapped across it, in her arms the youngest born, who spends his day on an old sack or skirt in a corner of the field, and tugging at her skirts come the little ones, piping and chirruping like chickens clinging to the shelter of the mother-hen's wing.

Marriage is generally arranged by some elderly woman friend, of whom there are always one or two in the village who really regard this as their business. She makes the inquiries or *pourparlers*. Then one fine morning a friend of the prospective Benedict will arrive at the girl's house with a bottle of wine, closely followed by the bridegroom himself, and hey presto! she is engaged. There is rarely the wooing, trysts or tender avowals of love customary in the West, which lend such a glow and glamour to the course of Love's Young Dream; but notwithstanding this rather matter-of-fact and business-like arrangement of their destinies, the marriages are generally fairly happy. Perhaps the absence of romance and idealism leads to a clearer acceptance of life, hard and working as it really is.

Marriage quickly follows the betrothal. The bridegroom arrives with the band of Tzigane musicians to fetch the bride, who is dressed in all her best. In some districts she wears a

wonderful and barbaric-looking tiara on her head, which has often been in the family for generations, and has adorned all their brides.

The best man, who, as in all Eastern countries, is a person of almost as much importance as the bridegroom, is also very finely arrayed. He holds the "Brad," which he must never for a moment cease holding, even when dancing or feasting, until the ceremony is over. It is a branch of the fir-tree, and is symbolical of hardy vigour, health and fecundity, and is decorated with ribbon surmounted by a gilt cross fastened with red silk.

Over the bride's head bread is broken, of which she eats a little; she then kneels to her parents for their blessing, and the pop, or priest, then marries her. After the ceremony follows the dinner, and then the national dance, the "hora," which, if the weather is fine, they dance (all joining hands) on the village green opposite the pop's house, to the strains of the gypsy band, until it is time for the bride to enter her new home, to which she is accompanied as far as the door by her relatives.

The poor best man was the one who had my entire sympathy, for he is never permitted, either while dancing, eating, or frolicking around, to lay aside for a moment the "Brad," or fir branch, until the whole day's long ceremony is over, for it is considered very unlucky to let it leave your grasp, and he would come in for general abuse if he were to relax his hold on the talisman. When a girl dies unmarried, the "Brad" or fir branch that should be carried at her wedding is always laid on her coffin.

To the girl-bride—for, unlike the Serbs, they marry at nineteen and twenty-two—life is often hard. The babies come quickly, and maternity and hard work age them prematurely. Little hungry mouths have to be fed, housework and fieldwork done: hard labour and little rest. . . . Spinning or weaving for the needs of man and hairs takes up their winter evenings: a ceaseless round of work their days, bringing up the big brood of little ones, to whom they are very tender mothers. Only on five days can they afford a little meat or get a little roast—lamb at Easter, goose or roast pig at Christmas. The staple fare is the "Marmaliga," or thick porridge made from maize. Like the porridge the Scotch hain is brought up on, there is no doubt as to its

nourishing, bone-making qualities, for peasants and children are a fine, sturdy race.

The years glide on, the children grow up, and the old parents are laid to rest. . . . A white cloth is hung outside the house to show death is within. Arrayed in their tidy best, they lie in their red-lined coffins uncovered; a stick lies in their wrinkled folded hands, to help them on their last journey; some money is placed on their foreheads to be given to St. Peter. . . .

The coffin stands in the yard, and the gypsy band and relatives stand around and take a last look at them before the cortège starts. Then the musicians, walking first, begin their wild, melancholy music, followed by the coffin and relatives carrying trays of white cakes. Stops are made at cross-roads, when prayers for forgiveness for past offences are asked. At the grave-side wine is poured into the grave, a taper is placed in the hands of the dead, the lid is laid on the coffin, and the soft earth soon covers the toil-worn bodies. . . .

The crosses that one sees at the heads of Roumanian graves have always a hollow carved in them, in which are placed a small lamp and bread for the long journey into the Beyond. It is a custom that recalls the ancient Egyptian practice of providing jars of grain and oil for the journeys of their departed.

There seems to be much variety in their funeral customs, probably in some cases due to what can be spent upon the ceremony. In general, however, the cortège starts with men in black, with plumes on their hats, holding lamps draped in crêpe, who ride on horseback. Boys follow, carrying silver platters on which are bread and salt and the cake which is eventually laid on the altar, and of this latter all the mourners have a small portion.

The pops, or priests, dressed in gorgeous robes, follow the hearse in carriages, and at cross-roads will get out and recite a short prayer. A band sometimes accompanies the procession with music.

In the upper classes Mass for the departed is celebrated in the church seven days after the funeral, then seven weeks later, and again at seven months, the final service being conducted seven years after the burial.

At some funerals professional women mourners, "Boci-

toats," are engaged to grieve and wail, as in ancient times.

In the towns the coffin is not open to view and with the lid off, as in the country districts. Instead of this a top hat is placed upon the lid, and if the body be that of a woman, a portion of her shawl is left hanging out of the coffin.

When a girl dies the horses are draped in white; young girls also walk beside the hearse, chanting prayers. One saw various-coloured coffins—black, white, grey, purple, scarlet, and once, a tiny one, in a soft blue velvet, covered with a creamy old wool glittering with gold sequins, probably the inherited wedding vestment of the poor mother, whose husband was carrying the cherished little burden, accompanied by the pop, to the cemetery.

In the poorer classes the carriage containing the relatives will often be yoked on to the hearse, presumably for economy's sake.

The pops, who wear their hair long, are generally of humble origin and lead hard-working, self-sacrificing lives. They are exalted in the eyes of their parishioners by reason of their sacred office, but for the most part follow the simple, laborious life of the people they dwell among.

They are bound to marry before taking Holy Orders, and generally take to wife one of the daughters of the clergy, or a woman with a little money, as they have little means of their own and their stipend is small.

A Bishop, before assuming the duties of his office, must be either a widower, or else he must divorce his wife, who goes into a convent—a striking proof of conjugal self-sacrifice for the sake of her husband's advancement and in the interests of Holy Church. Before his consecration a Bishop retires to a monastery for a few months' retreat.

I saw many pops, but only met one to talk to. He was a very popular and well-known preacher in Bucharest, and a cheery, jolly soul, who spoke excellent French and understood English, which he had studied for the sake of our literature.

I told him the story of our country parson whose name was Mr. Dam. In our village in Oxfordshire there was, close to the church, a tiny Roman Catholic chapel where the priest's name was Father Hell.

At the birth of Mr. Dam's first child Father Hell met him

in the little post-office, hurriedly writing a telegram. Knowing that the expected event had taken place, Father Hell congratulated him, saying, with a twinkle in his Irish eyes, "Well, I suppose it is a Damson?"

"Oh, no," said the proud parent, "it's a Damsel."

My cheery friend the Roumanian pop roared heartily over the witty reply.

It is a curious fact that although their religion has not such a hold upon the people as in other Latin countries, for the men go to church but seldom, yet their acceptance of the obligation of fasting which the Church imposes upon them is tenacious. On an average the peasant fasts at least two hundred days in the year, and even if other food than that ordained were offered to him by his master or his friend it would be refused with the expression that it would poison him.

Many of their customs are interesting, and one especially, which is only recently declining, is the disinterring of a corpse after seven years' burial. If the customary disintegration has not taken place, it is considered a sign of the excommunication of the deceased, and fresh ministrations and offerings to the Church are necessitated. If, on the contrary, all is as it should be, the bones are collected, washed in wine, placed in a white satin bag, and reinterred with becoming ceremony. They are superstitious, and have curious beliefs. In many of the old houses a snake will make its home in the roof among the rafters, and will be welcomed as a visitor that brings good luck to the inmates, who always lay a plate of food on the floor for it at night, which it eats when they are asleep. How differently we would welcome such a guest!

I remember one winter at an hotel at Biarritz an Eton boy on holiday leave kept a snake in his bedroom. He missed his pet one day—an evil-looking, green-eyed, active gentleman, about three feet long. What excitement reigned in the hotel! What a hue and cry was raised! It was from the third story he had started out on his voyage of adventure, and all the twenty-five ladies and gentlemen on that floor, seeking rest and repose from their various ailments in this winter resort, were thrown into a great state of agitation. They harangued the boy and the manager in no uncertain tones, and for many a day searched excitedly under beds and bedding, up chimneys, behind wardrobes, and on cur-

tain corners for the adventurous visitor. Men slipped on their clothes with caution in the morning, and the women raked the sheets and under the pillows, and checked their dresses and stockings, in a wild fear that he might have found a refuge there. But he was never discovered, and one can only surmise that he slid down a rain-water pipe like a frightened thief, and made for the golf links, where he certainly would have found a hole!

Though the Roumanian peasant may not fear a snake, he has a terrified but sure belief in the existence of werewolves, vampires, the evil-eye, witchcraft, and all sorts of harmful spirits. Mothers will tie up their children's hair with a red bow, red being considered here a safeguard against the evil eye. The pallor and thinness of the consumptive, or those who suffer from anæmia, is always ascribed to the vampire, who bleeds them slowly to death in their sleep at night, and there are evil spirits who live in empty houses, ruins and wells who have to be placated by offerings.

In olden times, and even now in some of the remote country districts, the superstition is still held of insuring the safe completion of a building by immuring a human being within its walls. In some places a mason will grasp the opportunity of measuring with a wand the shadow of a passer-by and the wand is then built into the wall. They even believe that this unconscious victim at death becomes a "stake," or ghostly spirit, that haunts a ruin.

A pretty custom observed on St. George's Day, or the first of May, is the hanging of big branches of fresh greenery over their doorway to welcome the approaching spring.

Another curious little custom is similar to the phœnic bond made between friends in Serbia that I have already mentioned. In Roumania boys and young men will swear eternal friendship for each other, and the Church sanctions this by a service, during which the boys' feet are chained together. It is considered binding both morally and legally, as would be that of a blood relationship, and is designated by the term "Brothers of the Cross."

In common with other nations they have their proverbs reflecting life as experienced by them in their little corner of the world:

"Do not put your spoon into the pot which does not boil for you."

"In vain you show light to the blind."

"Money is round and rolls easily."

"Work is a golden bracelet."

"One crow never pecks out another's eyes."

They have many legends and heroic tales, which they tell their children on winter nights, of the early Trajan days, for the Emperor is held in reverent and adored memory. On one of the highest peaks of the Carpathians, Ceahlăul, which stands 9,000 feet, there is a colossal statue of the tutelary goddess of those early days, the heathen Dacian goddess, Dokai, or "Baba Dokai" (old Dokai), as she is called. It is partly formed of natural rock formation, and partly rudely sculptured, and represents an old woman surrounded by a score of sheep. It stands on this great peak, where it can be seen for miles, and is venerated by the country people, who have many traditions about it.

Our travels took us right through the country from south, northwards, and in point of view of natural beauty, Roumania presents as varied and beautiful aspects as other countries whose charms are more universally acknowledged. The savage wildness of her snow-topped mountains and mysterious glens, the brooding magnificence of her forests, or the placid calm of her great plains, appeal strongly to the lover of beauty. Here a subtle link seems to exist between Nature and her son. Centuries of repression and the solitary life led by so many, as shepherds of the great flocks they lead to pasture on the lonely hills and plains, have developed this instinctive sentiment, this clinging affection to the Nature-mother, who, though she sometimes may fail them, has been from immemorial time their support and hope. The hot languorous summer, the cruel winter frost of the great plains, the sombre loneliness and melancholy of the far hills, have tinged their natures with sadness and poetry, hidden often under an exterior of quiet calm.

Roumania loses her beauty as she nears the north and approaches the river Pruth, where one looks across to the mysterious gloom of the great Russian plains. To the peasant it is a river of ill omen. Cholera, plague, famine are all ascribed to its malevolent influence, and even the horrid burr which the wind blows across it is denounced in their verses; and indeed the Pruth burr is a perfect king of burr

posts: it creeps into the houses, tying knots in everything—clothes, bed-clothes, wool, flax—into the children's hair, which it mats and tangles, and as for the poor horses' tails, they become a solid, wedged mass, more like a club than a tail, and so heavy they can hardly whisk them.

The vehicles in the country districts—for one can hardly call them carriages—that convey travellers (for there are no tourists at yet) are queer-looking things—springless, and like a big, wide, open, square basket, into which the occupants and their luggage are indiscriminately packed. They rattle and jolt along the roads, drawn by four skinny, rat-like little horses, almost: unkempt and half-starved-looking, they, however, go at a great pace.

For those who like less of a bone-shaking experience, and a more leisurely progress, there are the wooden carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes, which, when filled with clean straw, are not at all bad. The principal drawback is the irresistible temptation that fording a stream presents to the buffalo—every idea leaves him, except that of the supreme delight and satisfaction of lying down and wallowing in the cool water; and to a determined wallower all cajolery, prodding and oburgation is utterly useless until he has had his wallow, the cart swinging and swaying perilously during the operation! In the larger country towns, however, a taxi or motor can generally be hired for the expeditions one wants to make.

Roumania is celebrated for its monasteries and convents. A few date back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and many to the seventeenth. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were veritable fortresses, offering the peasants the only sanctuary during the horrors and ravages of war. They possessed great wealth and had priceless treasure in vestments—jewelled and with marvellous stitchery—missals, gold and silver ikons, chalices, crosses—many of them wonderful presents from Russia.

One of the most interesting things we saw in the Museum at Bucharest, and which probably belonged to one of these great monasteries, was the celebrated "Trésor," found by a peasant when ploughing his field at Busén. It comprises a richly embossed assortment of gold plates and vases, which stand upon a larger tray of gold, to which the people have given the quaint title of the "hen and chickens."

Some wonderful gold crowns and barbaric jewellery were also found about the same time, and have been pronounced unique specimens of the Gothic period. They were probably buried to escape being stolen during some of the wars that devastated the country.

In past times many of the sons and daughters of the nobility entered the monasteries and convents; indeed, with respect to daughters, if they did not or could not marry, their parents in many cases compelled them to face this alternative.

The monks and nuns each had their own *house, garden* and separate servant, the poorer ones living in the great central building. The life was a peaceful one—passed often in most romantic and lovely surroundings and by no means shut off from the world, for they were allowed to see their friends and relatives and to have them visit them. An intellectual life, and an interest in what was passing in the outer world, was more or less maintained, which is somewhat wanting now, and only those seeking a quiet life, but not too severe a retirement from the world, sought its seclusion. Now the Government does not encourage the monastic state, and only permits them to take full vows when the women have reached the age of forty and the men sixty.

Some of these monasteries are situated in lovely scenery, generally on the lower slope of wooded hills, with good shooting, which is let by the Government.

The first thing one notices is the brilliant, shiny cupolas, sometimes of burnished copper, sometimes gilt. The great front gate is often as imposing as that of a citadel, and is called "Clopotnitza." Within is the guest-house, "Fundank," where visitors or travellers are received and lodged. Inside the church are often very elaborate carving, fine gilding and marvellous frescoes. The latter belonging to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were of a particularly lurid type—the artist's imagination then revelled in all the horrors of Purgatory, the tortures of the damned. Great green serpents with gaping jaws were there, into which Satan was pitchforking with great activity the poor souls swimming in a sea of blood and fire, while little devils with red-hot pincers accelerated the victims' pace by pinching and tweaking their legs as they disappeared into the ser-

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pent's yawning jaws. One of the tortured had probably been a very gay little lady, for though her head had disappeared down the monster's gullet, she showed elaborate petticoats, red stockings, a comely leg and black shoes.

Some of the most celebrated of these monasteries are: the Monastery Ajapia Indetul Neamt, the Monastery Bistrita Indetul Valcea, and the Monastery Tismana Indetul Gorj. They are in the midst of most beautiful scenery, and one can be lodged at them a good deal more comfortably than at the Bulgarian ones. The roads, too, have been improved so enormously everywhere, to suit the needs of the motor-loving Roumanian leisured class, that an expedition to many of them can be made a charming and most interesting experience.

XII.

DESTINY IN THE MAKING.

ROUMANIA, though long under Turkish domination, is a Latin country, as already stated, and neither geographically, ethnologically nor politically does she form one of the Balkan States. The Balkan States all lie south of the Danube; Roumania lies to the north of it.

Its history, like that of all the Eastern countries that lay close to the conquering Turkish and Roman empires, shows a long period of trouble and conflict extending over fifteen centuries. The earlier inhabitants were the Getae and the Dacians, who inhabited the three countries of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania in 90 B.C.—A.D. 10. Ovid, who was sent into exile here, describes them as having "rough voices, savage features, and are a striking image of the god Mars," and he also adds, "The sword is their instrument of justice." He may have been a little embittered by his long exile, and did not do them the further justice of adding that they believed in the migration of souls and in immortality—were stoics teaching the submission of the body to the will, "virtue as the supreme good and vice the only evil." Indeed, these earlier Dacians seemed to be a people cast in bronze. Zamolxis, one of their great sages, had taught them to regard death as the end of a poor, transitory existence and the prelude to a far greater and eternal one.

In A.D. 106 the Roman Emperor Trajan conquered them and turned Dacia into a Roman province, Decebalus, the last King of the Dacians, committing suicide in despair. But Trajan's rule was a just and regenerative one. He founded schools, cities, built aqueducts and roads, the remains of which can still be seen and some being still in use. The land was divided "fraternally." The expression is historic,

for it truly denoted the wise and generous system on which he founded this early Roman colony.

The memory of the great Emperor is held in so much esteem and veneration, and so great was his influence, that the latter-day Roumanian prefers to lay emphasis on his Roman ancestry rather than on the Dacian strain. About A.D. 270 the Roman rulers abandoned Trajan's Dacia, and the country was invaded and ruled successively by Huns, Goths and Avars (the latter a wild Turkish tribe, barbaric and debauched) until 1290, when Rudolf the Black came down from the mountains and founded the principality of Wallachia. Shortly after this a Roumanian chieftain called Dragosh, also from the mountains (for it was to these fastnesses that the original colonists had retreated during the years of invasion), created the principality of Moldavia, and these two countries managed to exist and hold together all through the years and vicissitudes of Turkish domination, until 1859, when they were united under one King, though governed by separate Princes or "vojevods."

During this period they passed through much bloody turmoil, eternally resisting the domination of Turkey.

Among their rulers a few only can be mentioned in this very brief account of an extraordinarily interesting people and period. Of Mircea, the first great Prince of Wallachia, 1386-1418, Xenopol says "he is one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Roumanian principalities." He kept his country so intact that his importance among the surrounding nations was very great. He made treaties on terms of equality with the Kings of Poland and Hungary, and played a clever diplomatic rôle with Turkey.

His successors as Princes of the two principalities were Stephen the Great, of Moldavia, and Vlad, the Impaler, of Wallachia. The latter lived up to the reputation his name implies. He impaled enemies and his own people by hundreds, rich and poor alike, and a favourite sport was to have the turbans nailed to the heads of Turkish envoys who refused to bow their heads before him. He refused the usual tribute to the Turks of five hundred children, and was attacked by them in consequence, but succeeded in routing them. He was deposed by Stephen, Prince of Moldavia, who reigned for fifty years, mostly spent in warfare and in trying to liberate his country from the Turk. His capital

was Bukovina, and a monument has been erected to him in Jassy, the old capital of Moldavia, by present-day patriots who recognize how he tried to realize the highest ideal of the national destiny.

Among his successors, John, the Terrible, and Michael, the Brave, were the most renowned, and they continued to make a vigorous resistance to Turkish rule.

The Princes continued to be mostly of Roumanian origin, but got their appointments from Constantinople. One of the ablest rulers during this period was the Roumanian noble, Sherban Cantacuzène, who came to the throne in 1699. He greatly fostered the national feeling of independence among his people, encouraging education, translating the Bible, and having it printed in the native tongue. He was also the first to establish friendly relations between Russia and the principalities.

When the Turks had overrun the Balkans, and were besieging Vienna in 1683, he, joining forces with John Sobieski, King of Poland, relieved the city. He was assassinated at the instigation of the Turks just as he was ready to start as Commander-in-Chief of the armies of Austria and Roumania to retake Byzantium, and re-establish the empire his forefathers had ruled over in the fourteenth century.

His wife, a brilliant and beautiful woman, was a wonderfully able consort to the Prince. She was celebrated for the remarkable correspondence she maintained with the Emperors of Austria and Russia concerning the mutual relations of their countries.

Sherban was succeeded by his nephew, Constantine Brancovano. Upon the latter's death followed the unhappy period of rule by the Phanariots, "Greeks of the Fanar, who had been the lowest and most corrupt servants of the Porte," who bought their thrones from the Turks, and who, following their example and command, ruled with violence and corruption. It is astonishing that the national spirit was not completely extinguished, and we can only attribute this fact to the naturally hopeful and vigorous Latin temperament of the people. In despair they turned their eyes northward to Russia, hoping that she might help them to secure their independence. But Russia dreamed of conquest, not aid, and the people soon realized that a Russian liberator

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might only mean exchanging one master for another, and it is this period, 1738, which constitutes the dawn of anti-Russian policy.

Constant intrigues over the fate of the two storm-tossed principalities by Russia and Turkey occupied the years until 1812, when the Treaty of Bucharest fixed the river Pruth as a boundary between the two empires. Turkey still held suzerainty over the two principalities, and Russia kept Bessarabia and the mouths of the Danube. The loss of Bessarabia was a tragic blow to the Roumanians, and the river Pruth divided relatives and kinsmen on one side from the other, and became a river of ill omen up even to the present day.

In 1856, after endless warfare and intrigue by Russia, Austria and the Porte over the brave but unlucky country, the European Powers, by the Treaty of Paris, granted the union of the two principalities, the election of a foreign Prince, hereditary succession and a monarchical system of government. Some of these stipulations were a little premature, and several of the Powers would not concur, but, notwithstanding, this was Roumania's opportunity and she embraced it, with what results her history of to-day can show.

Prince Charles, the second son of Prince Antoine Charles of Hohenzollern, was the candidate upon whom the nation's choice fell. This foreign Prince, whose acceptance of the throne offered him had so many touches of romance connected with it, was young, handsome, and of a pleasant disposition, and, besides his powerful relations, did not lack an Egeria to help and guide him in this momentous decision. Madame de Cornu, friend and agent to Napoleon III. and a personal friend of Prince Charles, was an able and exceedingly clever woman, gifted with a strongly marked talent for diplomacy. She was supported by two other friends, Madame de Lluys, wife of the French Foreign Minister, and the Baronne de Francke, and they worked whole-heartedly together for the Prince's candidature. Some of Madame de Cornu's letters to the young Prince at this time, and also later, read most charmingly and are full of a splendid moral encouragement and help.

An interesting fact is mentioned by the late Queen Dowager, "Carmen Sylva," in one of her writings, for she

relates that "When the crown of Roumania was offered to the young Prince of Hohenzollern, he opened the atlas, took a pencil, and seeing that the line traced between London and Bombay passed through the principality that called him to power, he accepted the throne, saying: 'That is a country with a future before it.'"

On May the 8th, 1866, Prince Charles, travelling second class in order to avoid attention, with a suite of two (who travelled first class), and armed with a passport declaring him to be one Charles Hettinger—for there was imminent danger of an outbreak of war with Austria—arrived at Turnu Severin on the Danube, the border-line of his adopted country. It was on this very spot that seventeen centuries earlier the great Emperor Trajan had alighted and founded the Roumanian nation.

Prince Charles, on his arrival at the capital three days later, was proclaimed Prince Carol of Roumania.

In the following words, which form part of his first speech to his people, one realizes the confidence in his destiny that inspired this young ruler:

"Citizen to-day, soldier to-morrow, if it be necessary, I will share with you both good and ill fortune. For the future all is common to us. Have confidence in me, as I have confidence in you. God alone knows what the future has in store for our country! As for us, let us be content to do our duty! Let us strengthen ourselves by peace! Let us unite our energies in order to be equal to events. The Providence which has brought your elected Prince here, and which has removed every obstacle from my path, will not leave its work unfinished."

And, indeed, the task he undertook was one of great magnitude. The country lay inert and feeble, bled by the long centuries of lawless oppression; corruption and immorality in high quarters, misery and subjection in the lower; its finance was in an appalling muddle, the army in a deplorable state of administrative disorder. It needed a clear head and a stout heart not to be dismayed by such a tangle, and these words show how deeply he felt this responsibility: "When I accepted the throne of Roumania, I knew that the duties imposed on me were immense, yet I confess the difficulties to be conquered are greater even than I had imagined."

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But with tact, patience and a certain shrewd discernment he brought his country through those early struggles to the proud and independent position she now occupies. "I follow what I take to be my duty, and have never found it fail me," are the simple words of honest purpose which guided and animated King Carol all through his life.

In 1869 he married Princess Elizabeth of Wied, a Princess of great beauty of mind and nature, who threw herself heart and soul into the cause and aims of her adopted country, and who by her brave support and devoted affection for the King showed the country an unexampled picture of simple domestic happiness and loyalty seldom witnessed in the unions of a throne.

The Prince devoted the early years of his reign to the consolidating of the military defences of his country, and keenly alive to the necessity of an efficient army, he at once set about the attainment of his aim. Some years later, when the Russo-Turkish war broke out and Russia found herself in serious straits at Plevna, Prince Carol, at the head of his now excellent army, took the field and command, saved the situation, routed the Turks, and gained the complete independence of his country.

In 1881 Roumania proclaimed herself a kingdom, and the Prince was crowned King Carol I. with a crown made of iron from one of the cannon captured at Plevna.

When King Carol came to Roumania in 1866, the army consisted chiefly of raw levies. Few had uniforms, and in many cases were armed only with old rifles, sabres and pikes. But his training under the great Moltke had well fitted the King for the necessary organization. The army he led so magnificently to the relief of the Russians, and which so victoriously defeated the Turks in 1877, added a brilliant page to the Roumanian history.

As a well-equipped fighting machine, it is one to be seriously reckoned with, for it has reached a highly efficient standard of excellence and can compare well with any other in Europe.

Their peace footing consists of five army corps, 5,000 officers, and in war time about 500,000 non-commissioned officers and men, cavalry included. The infantry is armed with the Mänlicher magazine rifle, the horse and field artillery with Krupp guns, which have been greatly im-

creased the last two years. Mountain batteries and field howitzer batteries are armed with the Schneider gun, and great attention has been devoted to aerial warfare during the last few years, while Prince Cantacuzène, himself an intrepid flyer and a keen sportsman, well-known in London and Paris, has performed invaluable services in equipping and advancing this vital branch of the service.

The King is Commander-in-Chief of the Army, assisted by a special staff, and there is a staff college for officers, the course of instruction lasting two years.

Roumania is a well-fortified State. A strong line of forts, designed by Brialmont, who considered them better than Antwerp, runs from Galatz to Focsani, about fifty miles in length, and strong bridge-heads have been erected at the Danube, defended by modern guns.

On the Western frontier the great Carpathian range forms a splendid natural defence, which has been utilized to the utmost advantage. Bucharest, the capital, is also an entrenched camp, defended by a girdle of forts connected by railways, roads and telegraph communication. But the great siege guns used in the present war have shown how valueless fortifications are against the smashing force of the howitzer.

The soldier begins his training early, and even at school the boys are drilled and instructed. As soon as he is of age he draws a lot. If he is chosen he goes sadly, for though he is a fine fighter, he is also a dreamer with a deep love for his pastoral life, the wide plains and mountains, and barrack life is repugnant to him. Still, he goes through it well, for they are a quick, naturally intelligent people, and being an adaptable person, returns from the town when his service is ended to the quiet country-side with all sorts of useful ideas and knowledge, but devoutly thankful to be with his sheep and great cream-coloured oxen again.

Shortly after the celebration of the anniversary of His Majesty's accession and the great advancement of the general prosperity of the people during his reign (the budget of the year 1906 having reached the highest figure ever recorded in Roumanian finance), a thunderclap fell upon the unsuspecting nation. Like muttering thunder in the distant province of Moldavia the peasants rose in revolt against the system of land tenure and the great land trusts,

which under the rule of notorious Polish Jews were persecuting and grinding the peasant class down to a starvation wage.

The Government, under the somewhat weak premiership of George Cantacuzene, did not grapple with the situation at once, and reluctance was felt at ordering the troops out. The hesitation was fatal, and the revolt spread like wildfire in all directions. Students, schoolmasters, gypsies, tramps joined the now thoroughly aroused peasantry, who swept through a large number of the country districts, devastating and burning every house and property they passed.

In the capital the excitement was intense, and troops were at once dispatched to the affected districts, but the rising was so widespread, and the sedition preached by the students so rife, that great fears were entertained lest the peasantry should march on the capital. Meetings were held in the city, hurried consultations of the Cabinet took place, and sinister fears—although not justified and groundless—as to the defence of the town created almost a panic.

Principally at the urgent wish of M. Take Jonescu, the Cantacuzene Government offered the resignation of the Cabinet, and the formation of a new one was entrusted to M. Sturdza, leader of the Liberal party, and with the advent of General Averesco, the new Minister of War, stern measures of repression were taken just in time to prevent a catastrophe.

It has been a sad page of history to add to the long ones of progress and prosperity that the country can show, but it has not been written in vain, as amelioration of the state of the peasantry and a readjustment of the existing agrarian conditions has followed.

In its essential features the disturbance may be described as an outburst of elemental anger and despair on the part of the peasants, such as has probably not been witnessed in Europe since the days of the French Revolution or the Chartist Riots in England. And this although the peasants in Roumania are freeholders of a little more than forty-three per cent. of the arable land of the kingdom.

Like all great upheavals, it was accompanied by cruelties—deeds were perpetrated which revealed only too clearly

those dark depths in the soul of man which find expression in ruthless destruction and bloodshed.

There is no need to enter into details ; suffice it to say that the fires of hate and fury which had sprung up on every side and threatened to devastate one of the fairest countries in Europe, after a short period of hesitation, natural in the circumstances, were quenched by the stern principle of duty shown by the soldiers, themselves of peasant origin, and kinsmen of the revolutionists.

The core of the trouble lay in a system which had gradually grown up and had so long prevailed that it had imposed itself and been regarded as an order inherent in the very nature of things—a system by which one man easily could and did oppress many of his fellow-men—a system once the curse of many countries and then the curse of Roumania—a system under which it was possible for a landlord, if he were unprincipled or even only careless, to procure the maximum of idle pleasure in the capital or Paris for himself by the unavailing toil and hardship of scores of peasants. I refer, of course, to the altogether unsatisfactory custom of subletting to unprincipled middlemen, a custom which, if not general, was very largely followed in Roumania.

Under these conditions the peasants had each a small holding—as I have said, forty-three per cent. of the arable land—but the big properties upon which the proprietors did not live were let out at ever-increasing figures to middlemen or even trusts, and this was more especially so in the north. Some of these middlemen were Jews who, forbidden themselves to buy land in Roumania, turned to speculation in working the land they leased.

The peasants, who were often backward in their agriculture, had to take land from these middlemen, who sought in their turn to make big profits. Hence the rent which the peasant paid in money or in kind had grown in the last decade out of all proportion to its value ; and as they were bound to work first for the middleman, little time was left them to till their own small holding, and their lives were spent in poverty and continual toil.

The revolutionists, or at least those who were able to formulate their wishes, demanded the suppression of all large properties, and burnt granaries, houses, agricultural

engines, everything that came in their way which was an evidence to them of power—the power which they believed had abused and defrauded them.

There was a shrewd suspicion that the then Radical Liberal Government had taken the opportunity of fomenting this discontent in order to advance their political aims, not realizing how far or how quickly it would spread; and it is a curious reflection that, on the Conservative Government resigning on the outbreak, it was this Liberal party who were called on to suppress the movement which so many thought they had encouraged.

As in all revolutionary movements, it originated in countless cases of real suffering and oppression, but the part played by the professional agitators—seditions school-masters, *no'er-do-wells*, and anarchists—in fomenting the revolt was the cause of its widespread anarchistic character.

But there were good men and true in Roumania, as elsewhere, sincere patriots who felt deeply these tragic events, and energetic measures were thought out and proposed for the alleviation of the peasantry and the remedy of the existing evils.

Monsieur Také Jonescu's bill, proposed even before the rising and accepted by the preceding Government, but, unfortunately, not passed, has sought to create a service of State Inspectors to supervise and inspect all agricultural contracts, also a Land Committee to buy land, which would be sold to the peasants at a moderate price, charging a low rate of interest for the amount to be paid.*

It is a misfortune that in Roumania there are comparatively few medium-sized estates. The country is divided into either immense properties belonging to one or two owners, or small holdings.

M. Jean Lahovary, former Minister in the Cantacuzine Cabinet, advises the instituting—as in France, Spain and Italy—of a Government Notary to the different districts to whom the peasants, quite unfamiliar with laws and procedure of contracts, can apply for advice and help at a moderate fee fixed by the State.

* Further reforms were instituted in 1907, when both Senate and Chamber accepted the principle of universal suffrage. In addition to this, the King has placed large estates belonging to the Crown for disposal amongst the peasants, while the Government have voted other large grants of land to be divided among those peasants who took part in the war.

Numbers of the peasants, in their ignorance of these laws, have been the victims of the wily and scheming Jews or middlemen, while many of these poor people holding their house and bit of land under the condition of *Droit primitif et coutumier*—the deed of which they doubtless signed with a cross, and which was witnessed by others as ignorant as they were—had found themselves, after years of labour, dispossessed of their little holding by the failure to conform to some complicated legal formality of which they were ignorant.

The system, then, of justice and administration of law for the country people was very inadequate, and the poor did not find equal justice with the rich.

But urgent measures were passed to relieve this inequality, and nowadays, if a peasant has right on his side, he will certainly secure justice, even if against the Crown.

In 1914 King Carol died. He had devoted his life to the advancement of his country, the development of the army, and the amelioration of the lot of his people, and with the aid and sympathy of his Queen encouraged in every way art, science, literature, and all the activities of a far-reaching benevolence. In his own words, "For the Queen and myself the most beautiful crown will always be the love and trust of our people, for whom we have but one thought—their greatness and their happiness."

King Carol was succeeded by his nephew Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, who had married the Princess Marie, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, and a cousin of the Tzar Nicholas of Russia. King Ferdinand is a man of pleasing and agreeable personality: a thoroughly constitutional monarch, he has his country's aspirations at heart.

His Premier, M. Bratiano, is the real power behind the throne, who is rightly or wrongly guiding the country to the destiny that awaits her, and on whom will fall the odium and blame should she cease to realize the national aspirations in the present Balkan upheaval.

M. Bratiano is a son of the former leader of the Liberal party, and it is interesting to note that he, as present head of the Liberal party, was chosen more as the son of his father than for his own ability—a curious instance of a Liberal

party suggesting the principle of concession by compromise. He is a man who undoubtedly does not lack a certain intelligence, and sometimes was clearly the situation in front of him, but he seems to be wanting in the necessary courage to act according to his convictions, or to grasp the psychological moment for vigorous, decisive action.

For there is no denying the fact that if Roumania had entered the war last spring, when Russia was over the Carpathians and well on the way to Cracow, with her help the Austrian armies might very well have been put out of action, and she would have got Bukovina and Transylvania, the possession of which is her heart's desire, while the German offensive and conquering of Poland might have been seriously interfered with. It is only fair to add, however, that part of the blame for Roumanian non-entry into the war then must be laid to Russia's account, for she would not consent in time to an agreement fixing the national boundaries for the future.

The hesitation and indecision of M. Brătianu will have far-reaching effects. Roumania stands at the parting of the ways: she has allowed Serbia to be annihilated, and hence she has a vastly strengthened and more powerful enemy in Bulgaria, who bars her southern boundaries and egress to the Aegean Sea, and who can also prevent her only egress from Europe by her Black Sea ports through the Dardanelles, the question of the occupation of which is a matter of profound importance to her.

And, above all, there is the question of the principle of nationality and the opportunity to redeem the four million Roumanians in Transylvania and Bukovina subject to Austrian rule, who must have sent many an appeal to the country of their race, as they were forced to fight for their oppressors.

But the leaders of the State regarded not these wistful appeals; they had a deep sympathy and enthusiasm for their Latin brothers, the French, but feared German military might, and a position of neutrality was assumed as the best guarantee for the nation's security. Public opinion is, however, undoubtedly in favour of the Allies, and firm in the hope to redeem Bukovina and Transylvania, as the most cherished and desired flowers of the Roumanian crown.

Meanwhile, as D. Mitrany says, Roumania waits while

"regiments composed almost entirely of Transylvanians have been repeatedly and of set purpose placed in the forefront of the battle and as often annihilated. Such could never be the simple-hearted Roumanian peasant's conception of his duty, and here, as in so many other cases in the present conflict, the nation at large must not be judged by the policy of the few who hold the reins." •

It was for these most vital reasons that the leaders of the Opposition, M. Také Jonescu and M. Filipescu, both ardent patriots, have started an agitation throughout Roumania to force the Government to act. One cannot help seeing *how right* their position is, in endeavouring to prevent the isolation and encircling of Roumania by the Central Powers and Bulgaria.

M. Bratiano's indecision and finesse have undoubtedly brought Roumania into a much more difficult position now than earlier in the year. Had Roumania mobilized immediately on the Bulgarian and Greek mobilization, there is little doubt that Bulgaria would have hesitated to attack Serbia.†

• The Balkans.

† Since writing the above Roumania has crossed the Rubicon. Summoned at the instance of the Petrograd Government, under the pro-German Premier Stuermer, to enter the war, she was promised in return for her intervention that she would receive the support of several divisions of the Russian army, as well as an adequate supply of munitions and artillery. Though inadequately prepared for hostilities, Roumania, full of trust in the Allies and in the loyalty of Russia, declared war on August 27th, 1916. The campaign opened with a brief period of brilliant success for the Roumanian armies. The passes of the Carpathians were forced, and three-fourths of Transylvania, her ancient province, peopled with nearly four millions of her exiled sons, was in her hands. Within a few days, however, Bulgaria and Turkey declared war upon her, and the two greatest generals of the Central Powers, Mackensen and von Falkenhayn, with immense forces and unlimited artillery equipment, were developing a giant offensive along her long frontier of 1,300 kilometres. With her untried organization, slender equipment, small armies, which had to contend against the war-seasoned veterans of four Powers, she had little chance of maintaining her positions, and was forced back, fighting superbly, but lacking in everything but bravery. Surrounded on all sides except on the north, from which the Russian help should have come, her defence was desperate but unavailing. None of the promised troops, munitions, or guns from Russia were forthcoming, and town after town fell before the victorious advance of the four Powers, who had determined to throw to the fullest extent against her the enormous weight of their military power, in order to completely crush the little country.

The evacuation of Bucharest, the fall of Eralia and Constanza within three months of the declaration of war, were the crowning acts of this terrible tragedy—a tragedy foreseen and planned by the traitor Stuermer,

It seems impossible to anyone who knows this people, with their intensely Latin sympathies, their devotion to everything French—indeed all the youth of the upper classes are educated in France—that there could be any doubt as to which side of the contest she would give her support.

A name it is perhaps necessary to mention in connection with Roumanian politics is that of the pro-German M. Marghiloman. The son of a wealthy farmer, he has ambitions which made him, on the outbreak of the war, transfer his tenderness and admiration for everything French to the more quickly earned approval of Berlin, an approval which he hoped, if they were victorious, would advance the otherwise dull outlook of his career. For he is quite an uninteresting and mediocre personality, to whom a success might come too tardily to satisfy his ambition.

Undoubtedly the most vigorous personality in Roumania is M. Titch Jonescu, whose name lies in the centre of politics allows him his little talent. He is a good-looking man of about forty-five. One of a race of almost brothers, he is certainly one of the most able men on this side of Europe. Forceful, characterful and sincere, he is endowed with a peculiarly suggestive charm which, coupled with his fine statistical powers and his keen intellect, have made him one of the most remarkable men of his day and the real leader of his party. As brilliant an intellect as M. Venizelos, he is like him in being a true master of wide vision and far-seeing views for the future destiny and welfare of his country.

Like our own strenuous tariff reformer, the late Joseph Chamberlain, he is a few for and hits out straight, clear and true, without fear or favour; a thorough patriot, with his country's prosperity and advancement as his ideal. In

who, with the assistance of Berlin, hatched this sinister plot, and summoned Roumania on interview on the promise of support which he had no intention of fulfilling, and with the promised intention of permitting the ill-equipped little country to be overrun, when he would then sue for a separate peace in consequence of a defeat which he would represent as a Roumanian and not a Russian one.

The full history of this, as well as the retreat of the dedicated but valiant Roumanian forces; the flight of the millions of starving fugitives in a winter of unparalleled horror and misery; the wonderful organisation and reorganisation of the Army, and its brilliant offensive in 1917; the overwhelming crash of the Russian Revolution, its consequent disorganisation and anarchy in the Army, and its tragic effect on unhappy Roumania, will be found in my book, "Roumania Yesterday and To-Day."

his chosen profession as lawyer he has attained a widespread reputation, and has cheerfully and voluntarily relinquished an enormous income to place his services and brilliant powers at the disposal of his King and country.

For the last twenty-five years he has been in all the Conservative Governments, and has been Minister of Finance, Interior, etc. In 1907 he left the Conservative party and formed one of his own on advanced Conservative lines.

Since the very beginning of the war he has seen clearly that duty and national interest were with the Allies, and even as far back as 1914, at the Crown Council under the presidency of King Carol, he repeated this conviction, and has persistently fought for this object.

M. Filipescu, Minister of War in the late Conservative Government, and since then leader of the Conservative party after the death of M. Jean Lahovary, is a staunch supporter of the same policy, and has joined with M. Jonescu in forming the "Fédération Unioniste," where party politics are laid aside, and intervention against the Central Powers becomes the one and only issue.

He is a strong, impetuous personality, enthusiastic and straightforward, and belongs to a very old and excellent Roumanian family.

* * * * *

I should like to give a brief outline of the great commercial and industrial expansion of the country, and the growing mental activity of her people during recent years. Speaking generally, Roumania is a great plain, rising gradually from the shores of the Black Sea until it reaches the heights of the Carpathians at the frontier. The soil is rich and the grain-producing districts are so extensive that Roumania is one of the great granaries of Europe. She has vast petroleum fields; indeed, the petroleum industry has been so developed that she now stands fifth among the great oil-producing countries of the world.

She has extensive coal-fields, anthracite and lignite, and among the minerals, silver, iron, copper, quicksilver, lead and tin are included. Numberless springs of mineral waters of great healing properties exist. Indeed the natural resources of the country are so plentiful, that it only wants capital and enterprise to open up great fields of wealth. Salt comes from the large mines at Okna, and immense

quantities of timber from the virgin forests of the Carpathians (of which there are seven million acres carefully cultivated) are served, comprising oak, beech, walnut, maple, pine) are floated down the tributary streams, roped together as rafts, eventually joining the Danube, and so to Galatz and Constanza, where it is exported. There are also great vineyards, and Roumania ranks fifth amongst the wine-growing nations of Europe: little of it is exported, however, for it is all consumed in the country. Large quantities of fruit are grown, and it is cheap and plentiful—apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries, medlars, apricots, melons and damsons, from the latter of which a rude spirit called "tsuica" is made.

A fine merchant navy, with its excellent ports at Constanza and Galatz, and good railways under State control have developed the trade of the country enormously. It is an interesting fact that only one bridge spans the Danube in its course through these lands of Eastern Europe, and that one is on Roumanian soil. There is a bridge at the Hungarian town of Pétervárad, 40 miles north-west of Belgrade, but there is not another till one comes to Cerna Voda, midway between Bucharest and Constanza—a distance of about 600 miles. The bridge at Cerna Voda is 100 feet above the river, cost (£1,400,000, and is a bit of work the Roumanian engineers may well be proud of.

The Roumanian fisheries on the Black Sea are particularly valuable for the sturgeon catch and the exportation of caviar to Berlin, Austria, and Belgium.

The fishermen here constitute a curious sect, virtually expelled from Russia, where they are not tolerated and are called "Lipovani." They object to vaccination, and a branch of them form the so-called "Bezpopovitsa" (priestless), from their avowed habit of killing their priests in order to create a direct intermediary between them and God.

The total population is a little over seven millions, including the Jews, who form a very large percentage of the population. They are distinctly one of the pests of Roumania. There were comparatively few of them until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when they began to flow in from Poland and Russia—a stream which kept steadily increasing. They are very prolific, but the Roumanian birth-rate is also very much higher, which tends to

balance their increase, or there would be no knowing how far the mischief would go, for they are a rapacious, deceitful and cunning people, who, ghoulish-like, prey on the simple peasant, and fatten on their ill-gotten gains.

In the north they are generally of German, Polish or Russian extraction. In the southern part of the country they are more of the Spanish-Jew type, who have wandered up from Greece, and who are superior to the other class. Salonika is their great centre, from which they migrate into the Balkans.

There is comparatively little serious crime, and what there is, is as in other Latin countries, generally of the *crime passionnel* order. The death penalty does not exist. Penal servitude, which means working in the salt mines, is the severest sentence given. The convict is paid a small sum of money daily, which he can either spend on little comforts or else have in a lump sum when he leaves. If the sentence is for life, he can bequeath it as he chooses.

The kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, having a parliament of two houses. The Senate consists of 120 members, elected for eight years, including the bishops and University representatives. The Chamber of Deputies has 183 members, elected for four years.

Until recently the literary activity of Roumania was not very extensive, but the national temperament, with its enthusiasm and mental endowment, has developed much within the last decade, and has produced artists and scientific men of acknowledged ability.

The early literature of the country consisted of the lives of saints, legends, chronicles and translations from the Slavonic or Greek literature. Later, about 1850, the French influence began to be felt, and with the coming of Queen Elizabeth and her keen interest in things intellectual Roumania began to advance.

Among names well known in Roumania is that of Mihail Eminescu, a poet who, though his life was clouded by trouble, poverty and eventual insanity, was the inspirer and mouthpiece for the dreams and aspirations of the young country. His work was tinged with melancholy, but his vivid style and mastery of language was undoubted.

Costac and Macedonski were also writers who have helped

by their writings to shape the literary future of their country to a fuller development.

Duiliu Zamfirescu, who is a member of the Roumanian Academy, is a fine novelist, as also Negruțel, whose historical stories much resemble those of Sir Walter Scott. As a literary critic, Tita Maiorescu's name is well known, and under his direction the national literature has found its true path. He founded the first serious literary review of Roumania, the *Convorbiri literare*.

N. Iorga, also a member of the Roumanian Academy, is an eminent historian of European reputation. He has written the history of the Roumanian people in two large volumes, and another on the Byzantine Empire, which have been translated into English and German.

In the domain of art, Grigorescu is a celebrated painter of landscape, and in his work he has been able to transmit and express very wonderfully the poetic beauty of the great Roumanian plains. In music, Enescu occupies an international position, his symphonies and chamber music being well known to the ears of the musical world.

The people possess a mine of poetical wealth and a precious source for literary inspiration in the varied collection of folk-songs and ballads, perhaps one of the richest in the world, which was composed by the people themselves and transmitted orally to their descendants through many generations. Vasile Alexandri, who died in 1890, and was a Roumanian poet distinguished not so much for his artistic power as for his patriotic ardour, which helped towards the realization of Roumanian independency, collected and published some of the most beautiful of these treasures, which have been delightfully translated into French. In the fine mind and high literary attainments, too, of Queen Elizabeth the Roumanians possessed an influence which naturally fostered and promoted the highest inspirations of the national genius and did much to advance the cause of art and science.

A line of Victor Hugo characterizes very charmingly the influence she and her husband, the late King Carol, exercised on the nation :

"L'âme souffrait l'idéal et l'âme se rédit."

XIII.

TWO QUEENS.

ROUMANIA has the distinction of having the most beautiful of all the Royal ladies in Europe on her throne—Queen Marie, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and his wife the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia. She is thus a cousin of King George and of the Tsar Nicholas.

So it was with feelings of keenest anticipation and pleasure that we received a gracious command to lunch with their Majesties.

Punctually to the hour we drove up to the Palace and mounted by a broad red-carpeted staircase to the reception-rooms above, where we were received by General Robescu, Master of Ceremonies, Colonel Goccianu and a lady-in-waiting.

It was a brilliant morning, and the sun shone brightly over the gardens of the Palace and the gleaming roofs of the city that lay beyond. It bathed the room in a warm glow of light which brought out in generous measure the faint perfume of the many groups of flowers, and caught in delicate facets of colour the many bibelots and bric-à-brac lying about.

The room is long and spacious, and with its rich carved walls of dull burnished gold and the wealth of beautiful coloured embroideries and pictures, gives a jewelled Byzantine effect. Towards the windows, arched pillars form delightful alcoves, in one of which stands a very original altar-shaped piece of furniture of gilded wood, the carving in high relief and with deep festoons of roses looping the corners. It has a distinctly old Italian effect, and was executed from a design by the Queen. Near the door hangs a portrait of her when Crown Princess in Roumanian dress,

a sheaf of wild cherry blossom in her arm—an appealing and beautiful pose.

As the silver chimes of a clock rang out the hour, the folding doors opened, and the King, accompanied by the Queen and their two eldest children—the Crown Prince and the Princess Elizabeth—joined us.

The King was in uniform, which showed off to advantage his slight, well-knit figure. He is a handsome man, with a charming smile and gentle, dignified manner; a pointed light brown beard, grown when he was very ill, suits him admirably.

I had the honour of sitting beside him at lunch, and his views on life, travel, politics and literature were full of a shrewd discernment and tolerant outlook. On my other side sat the Crown Prince Carol, very blond and handsome, keenly interested in sport, army matters and aviation. He had met my brother, Captain Bertram Dickson, when he was visiting Prince Cantacuzène in Bucharest, and was keenly alive and interested in my brother's career and strenuous efforts up till his death to make the British War Office and Government realize the importance of aviation as a scouting and offensive arm of the Service.

The Queen was dressed in a clinging gown of ivory *crêpe de chine*, the rounded arms and throat bare but for a fine chain of graduated pearls. The poise of the head, with its beautiful golden hair, is admirable—regal, yet full of grace—the figure slender, the expressive eyes a changing blue, and the exquisite complexion—her English inheritance—one of pearls and peaches—to use a metaphor of old Sir Joshua Reynolds, who endeavoured to describe it thus in teaching his pupils how to paint—proclaims her the loveliest Royal lady in Europe.

Artistic to her finger-tips, she carries this sense through every phase of her life, and her dress, like her environment, is picturesque in the extreme.

After luncheon the Queen took me to see her private apartments, which are justly celebrated for their originality and beauty of design. It is here that one gets a true estimate of the inventive genius, the delicate skill in colour schemes, and the high artistic feeling which she possesses in an extraordinary degree. Walls and roof are of carved wood, overlaid with dull burnished silver; the floor, in

unglazed tiles of blue shading into cool greens, has tiger and polar-bear skins strewn about.

Two fine stone fountains in a Byzantine design hold a wealth of ferns and brilliant-hued azaleas, striking a note of tropical colour in the clear coolness of the Silver Room.

On the raised platform, under an alcove, lies the sleeping-couch, covered with a *couvre-lit* of beautiful stitchery in many shades of mauve. To the right is a *prie-dieu* of fine carving, and everywhere in quaint angles stand beautiful chairs and tables carved and made by Her Majesty's clever hands, while the wealth of bibelots gives evidence of the cultured taste and discerning eye of the connoisseur. Close by the door stands a handsome cabinet in carved and silvered wood, made and presented to her at Christmas by some of the servants on the estate whom she has taught.

On the walls hang numerous pictures and photographs—one a charming Danish scene by her aunt, our most beloved and gracious Queen Alexandra, and various clever water-colours painted by her sister, the Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia; while graceful studies of her children in most original frames painted by the Queen add but another interest to a room justly celebrated for its artistic decorations.

One of her interests is the collection of scent bottles of every country and period, and I was shown a few very fine specimens, though I believe the collection approaches nearly six thousand. Another of her interests, and a somewhat original one, is the collection of old Byzantine crosses taken from ancient graves and which have been placed in the parks surrounding the palaces of Cotroceni and Sinaia.

At the end of the corridor are the nurseries, and the English nurse-in-chief beamed proudly when congratulated upon the health and beauty of her charges. The rooms, big and sunny, were filled with the paraphernalia of happy childhood: toys, dolls' houses and the piebald rocking-horse—the faithful Dobbin of every English home—stood with meek, uncurled forelock, awaiting the sturdy little Prince Nikola's onslaught and ride.

At this, the Palace of Cotroceni—which is larger and more roomy than the one the late King and Queen occupied in Bucharest—Queen Marie holds afternoon receptions during the winter season, at which music is the leading feature. The

beautiful new music-room which has been lately added is built and decorated in the old English style.

Returning to the great salon, two of the younger children—a perfectly beautiful boy and girl—joined their Royal parents there, and romped about the room in all the abandon of merry youth. Princess Nigron begged me to tell them some new English conundrums, and my stock was soon exhausted in answer to their eager inquiries.

The one that pleased them most was, "How many legs has a horse?" and this even baffled the King and gentlemen of his suite. The answer delighted the children: "Six. Two hind legs and four (four) legs in front."

The royal children lead the simplest and healthiest of lives, both here and at Sinaia, and with their lovely complexions and masses of golden hair resemble their beautiful mother.

They are being educated and brought up on broad, modern methods, for the Queen, like her ambitious mother, the Grand-Duchess Marie, has her own ideas about education, which are fully shared by the King, and nothing will be omitted in equipping them for their future positions and in developing their natural qualities of mind and nature to the utmost. English is the language generally spoken in the Royal home, but the elder children already speak French and German quite fluently.

A great deal of her time is spent with them, for both she and the King are devoted to their family, two sons and three daughters—a quintette beautiful enough to have inspired the genius of a Greuze or Reynolds, and who are constantly to be seen with their parents. Indeed, the dictum of Carmen Sylva that "the profession of Queen demands three qualities, beauty, bounty and fecundity," may well be applied to her.

The Queen spent all her childhood in England at Eastwell Park, leading a stumping, healthy, out-of-door life with her brother and sisters. At eighteen she was betrothed to Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern-Zigmaringen, nephew and heir-presumptive of King Carol, and the marriage took place at Potsdam in January, 1893, the slender, lovely young Princess looking like a fairy in her bridal gown.

She was enthusiastically received in her new country, and she endeared herself at once by her sunny, sweet disposition,

and the appeal her brilliant beauty made to the æsthetic sense of an impressionable Latin race.

Her high-spirited, energetic and talented nature has wonderfully fitted her to be the Queen of a country that has the *Ville Lumière* as capital, with its gay and luxurious aristocracy. Apart, too, from the court and social side, she has thrown herself heart and soul into all the schemes, charitable and philanthropical, necessary for the education and progress of the country with wonderful judgment and unflinching tact and charm. Her generosity is unstinted: beautiful frames, pictures, carved wood and pieces of embroidery fashioned by her clever fingers are always at the disposal of charity and to be sold for the sick or suffering. Her patronage is freely given to music and the drama, and she is frequently to be seen at concerts and the theatre. She has founded the Society of Goddesses, of which she is the head, and each goddess acts as fairy godmother to one poor child at least.

In religious matters the King is a Roman Catholic; the Queen clings to her early Anglican faith, while the two elder children have been baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church, the faith of their country. Diverse as their religions are, no more happy or united family exists. He shares with his wife her fondness for all outdoor sports, and is a keen soldier, capital shot and graceful fencer. They are both ardent automobilists, and lovers and excellent judges of horse-flesh.

Indeed, dowered as both their Majesties are with the natural inheritance of intelligence, goodness of heart and high ideals—still further enhanced by the possession of their people's devotion—they should be sure of an illustrious reign, and one which will leave its mark on the history of their country.

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"CARMEN SYLVA."

Dusk had fallen and the lights were twinkling and lighting up the darkened city, casting long shadows across the courtyard and wings of the Palace, as we drove up for our first audience with Queen Elizabeth, better known to the world as Carmen Sylva.

The Palace is a long low building: a comfortable and unpretentious abode, once the home of a wealthy "boyard" or noble. It has been added to and much embellished, to render it suitable for a Royal residence. To the left of the courtyard, a smaller entrance leads to the private apartments of the Queen, and it was here we alighted; a magnificent full-bearded janitor in the Royal livery assisting and escorting us to the brilliantly-lit hall.

Divesting ourselves of our furs, we were conducted up the broad staircase, into a series of very charming rooms, lit up by the soft radiance of lamps which picked out in fine relief the mellow beauties of some fine old masters on the walls, and touched with bright gleams the beautiful *objets d'art* and bibelots, the massed beauty of flowers and the glowing tones of the old rugs scattered about.

Awaiting us in the first room were Madame Benjesco, the Queen's *dame d'honneur* and Monsieur Dall' Orsa, her private secretary, an accomplished musician and delightful man, who has been in Her Majesty's entourage for nearly seventeen years. They entertained us very charmingly with tea, until we moved through the intervening rooms to the big salon where the Queen Dowager received us.

We saw a beautiful, gracious figure with a crown of soft white hair and long lace veil, framing a face of exceeding sweetness and beauty of expression. The eyes, still full of the enthusiasm of youth, irresistibly draw one. The mouth with its finely-lined lips shows tenderness and compassion, while the pathetic drop that comes to those who have lived and suffered deeply traces its gentle line to the chin, with its evidence of courage and deep feeling. The hands are those of the artist, soft, supple, sensitive—the whole pose that of a most gracious Queen and woman. She was gowned in a soft gown of silver grey—cut to show her throat. She wore few jewels, and the long soft white veil that she wore on her head added to the graceful lines of her figure.

With a few words of welcome, she drew us into a luxurious little corner of the room, and asked us our impressions of Roumania and the countries we had just been visiting. She told us how much she loved travelling, but how little she had been able to indulge this taste.

We talked of the City of Lagoons, Venice, which she knew well, and of all its beauties and treasures of art.

Imperceptibly, we glided into the subject of music. She said she had heard how musical we were, and she hoped we would come and hear some music at the Palace one evening. She disliked any formal or big musical affairs, and only invited a few real music-lovers to them. She was very interested in hearing about the Heavenly Twins, as we called the Stradivarius and Montagnana violoncellos we had left at home.*

Music without melody did not attract her, and she found little beauty in the modern German composers. Her favourite masters were the three great B's—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms: Schumann, Mozart, Wagner, and of the French School, César Franck and Debussy, appealed to her much.

I told her how often I had sung her beautiful "Meer lieder" or "Songs of the Sea," put to music by Bungert, and the pathetic "Sand Seller," and how finely Sir Owen Seaman, poet, and present editor of *Punch*, had translated the words into English.

The mention of the sea caused a fresh glow of enthusiasm on her expressive face, and she took us into the adjoining apartment, where a beautiful organ stands on which she plays, to look at a big picture by the Russian artist, Airasowski, of a wild grey sea with wind-driven clouds, and crested billows like sea monsters snorting their salt spray to the whirlwind. It was a fine thing, and stood out sombre and full of remote mystery and breath of the wild sea wastes, in the perfumed beautiful room.

The call of the deep was one of the prevailing notes in her nature, and perpetually seemed to summon her. To her it meant none of the fear, the latent cruelty that it means to many, but a strong restful force, and to see it even in its wildest moods meant solace. She spoke also of suffering, mental and physical, and what had helped her to bear it.

As we returned to our seats, Her Majesty smilingly remarked, "Oh, I must show you that I am a needlewoman as well as a poet," and lifting from an adjacent table, she shook out in soft heavy folds a beautiful altar-cloth. It

* The Stradivarius was made for the great Visconti family of Milan in 1684, and has their coat of arms emblazoned on it in rich colour, both on the back and belly of the instrument. It was brought to England in 1800, but was subsequently taken to the West Indies, where it was lost to sight for some time, but eventually came into my husband's possession.

was fashioned in an extraordinary fine mesh of gold, with a Cross worked on this in deeper, closer stitchery, and ornamented with pearls and turquoises—a work of great beauty and delicacy, and destined for one of the churches, several of which already possess many valuable bits of her work.

One of the most beautiful, perhaps, of all the needlework she showed us, was the piece exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1900. It was a baptismal veil for Prince Carol, who was a baby then, and who will reign over Roumania one day. It was a little gem of delicacy and skill, a tiny poem in lace and fairy stitches! A Roumanian poet has written these charming verses on it:

CHANTON DE LA MARRAINE.

Apparece-moi pour que je chante
Au petit prince qui vient au monde,
Une aigle à grande envergure,
Un nid de nid en d'oiseaux.

J'en veux faire une couverture
Comme aucun ne s'en a eue,
D'une dentelle, d'une
Au d'un d'un d'un d'un.

Comme une ancienne distinction
Aux quatre coins d'un monde
Les serpents d'un monde
Au d'un d'un d'un d'un.

Au d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un
Nous sommes à d'un d'un d'un,
Les d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un,
Le d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un.

Prince charmant de la légende,
Tu seras d'un d'un d'un d'un,
D'un d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un,
Un d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un!

Tu seras d'un d'un d'un d'un,
Tu seras d'un d'un d'un d'un,
Tu seras d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un,
Tu seras d'un d'un d'un d'un d'un.

We begged her to tell us about the blind people she is so interested in, and her face kindled as she spoke of the colony she had established for them. Full of compassion, and touched by their sad lot, her one thought is to lighten their dark existence.

She spoke of the lack of funds which hampered the full realization of her aims. A site near Sinaia has been given by a generous sympathizer, and houses, each to accommodate two families, have been built, with workrooms, a club and church. There, relieved from the most pressing cares for their existence, they can work, every means being provided to develop their tastes and promote the full attainment of their talents.

This colony is called the "Hearth of Light," and is open to the blind of all nations, and the members will support themselves in the different crafts they undertake.

There are over 20,000 blind in Roumania; many of them, by reason of their poverty and affliction, are paupers and uneducated: unhappy stranded beings whose misery one can only dimly realize in reading de Maupassant's pathetic story, "L'Aveugle."

One of her blind people has invented a machine for printing by type, books of Braille type, until now embossed by hand. It was a rough experiment, but has been perfected after a year's close work and attention, and is now patented all over the world, placing the means of knowledge and a vast field of interest and happiness into the very hands of the blind. The machine will cost far less than any other of its kind, about three hundred francs only, and will be able to print books as easily for the blind as the seeing. Already, without any pushing, numbers of the machines have been sold.

I told her of a dear friend of mine (Captain Towse, V.C., of the Gordon Highlanders), who, during the South African War, in heroic defence of a position, had both his eyes shot away: of his brave courageous endurance of such a calamity, and the splendid example of hope and fortitude he was to many others, suffering or in despair.

How he cut down the trees in his country place, laid out and planned the gardens, played golf (and twice beat me at it too!), and had developed into a first-rate carpenter, making chicken houses, garden seats, quite fit for exhibition, and all sorts of useful as well as ornamental things.

She was astonished to hear that he travelled about alone, and was an expert salmon fisher, landing a 40-lb. beauty from the Tweed one of the last days of the fishing season. She was also exceedingly interested in hearing that he had

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

been made one of the Gentlemen-at-Arms and Sergeant of the Body Guard to the King, and did his duties like any of the others; and now he had been chosen to stand on guard round the bier of King Edward the Seventh, during his lying-in-state at Westminster.*

Clasping her hands and leaning forward, she cried eagerly: "Oh! do beg him to come out here, to speak, help, and encourage my poor blind people—tell him to come. Tell him I would like to meet him."

Many admirers of the Queen in distant lands have sent donations, as well as the Roumanian people, to further this noble work, for who has not a deep feeling of pity and compassion for those condemned by fate and misfortune to live in uttermost darkness?

From the adjoining room we could hear the chime of a clock striking seven, and were amazed to find we had been talking for an hour and a half.

Bending forward slightly, she said: "And now I must go. It is not good-bye, it is only farewell. This long talk we have had has been one of interest, each has much to give the other;" and indeed, as she so truly suggested, we are all pilgrims together. Invisible links bind us to one another; our speech, our looks, our souls mingle for a moment, striking the electric chain with which we are darkly bound."

Flushing low, we kissed the slender hand, and the gracious figure of the Queen vanished into the dusk of the inner room.

Two days afterwards we received a card summoning us to the Palace for a *private audience* Her Majesty was giving, and at six o'clock we ascended the fine staircase and into the big saloon where the Queen, surrounded by her ladies,

* During the last twelve months he has been working hard at one of the big new hospitals in France, closing and encouraging the severely wounded there, seeing their return, etc. He explained how he differs from the other hospitals here, begged him to come and visit their home. One tiny incident illustrates this. A man with terrible wounds to his head and one eye gone was immensely interested in learning that Captain Towne had also had great injuries to his brain as well as losing both eyes. On leaving, he said to the patient: "Keep your tail up and you'll get on." Next time he came, though very ill and unable to remember much, Tommy recognized him at once, and eagerly greeted him with: "I can't remember just what you said I was to keep up, Captain, but I'm keeping it up and Sister says I'm sane."

received us. As we curtsied low, she said: "I am so glad to see you again, and that you are here for my music."

About twenty of Her Majesty's most intimate friends had gathered round her, delighted to share in the musical pleasure she had prepared for them.

After tea in the small salon we all moved into the beautiful music-room which adjoins, and Her Majesty, seating herself, motioned to a few of us to come and sit near her.

The programme commenced at once, and we had a very masterly rendering of a string quartette by Glazonov with a scherzo movement of exceeding beauty. The glorious "Saphische Ode" and "Alte Liebe" of Brahms were well sung by a prima donna from Düsseldorf—of Brunhilde-like proportions—and she added "Entgegnung" of Richard Strauss's. Some brilliant piano-playing by a young Slav artist and another fine quartette by Novik ended the musical programme.

During the performance, the Queen sat in a low arm-chair, the light falling on the snow-white hair, which she picturesquely describes thus: "White hair is the foam that covers the sea after tempest." The busy fingers, never idle a moment, were working with amazing rapidity fresh meshes in the beautiful altar-curtain she had shown us. She worked quite unconsciously, for her eyes were often on the performers or glancing at us to smilingly demand our approval of some especially lovely passage.

The usual chill formality of a court was not emphasized here, for the wonderful dignity, combined with the expressive personality and sympathetic interest shown by Her Majesty, drew out the very best in everyone.

Many a world-famed artist has surpassed himself in this room before such appreciative, intelligent interest, and Duse, Sarah Bernhardt, the Coquelins, as well as the great musicians and authors of the day, have willingly travelled to this distant land to be received by this distinguished Patroness of the Arts.

While listening to the music I had ample opportunity to look at the rooms which the Queen has made such a reflection of her tastes and accomplishments, for no greater index to the character and disposition of a woman can be

found than in the way her home—the intimate encircling walls that enclose her from the world—is arranged.

At the far end of the big salon, where we had been received at our first audience, stands the winter-garden with its wealth of cool greenery, and one passes through a small salon, in which stands the great organ, to the *Salon de Reception*, and thence through an enormous arch to the Music Room.

Nothing could be more beautiful, more home-like, than these lovely rooms upon whose walls hang many examples by the great masters, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Ribera—only a few out of the fine collection the King had made—but which with the smaller canvases of the Finnish and fourteenth century school covered the warm crimson-hued walls.

Costly tables covered with bibelots of every description, beautiful cabinets, and here and there a statue or bronze with a background of lovely flowers give their note of distinction to the room.

The *Salon de Musique* has two platforms—a small one in the foreground for "petit comité" and a larger one at the back; around the room runs a gallery, the walls and woodwork carved by that master in wood, M. Stoehr, who has also at the palace at Sinats effected some veritable *chef d'œuvre* of artistic and decorative work.

Books, china and lovely tapestries have their place under the gallery. To the left lies the salon of the *dames d'honneur*, and beyond, the library of the Queen with its book-lined walls containing over twenty thousand volumes on History, Art, Literature, Philosophy and Science.

Madame Olga Maurojény, *Grande Maîtresse de la Cour*, has been over twenty years in attendance on the Queen, and has a personality of much dignity and distinction. Madame Zoe Bengeson, bright and charming, who received us on our first visit, and Madame Pournat were two of the others we met.

The music over, the Queen, after thanking and speaking a few words to each performer, rose and, coming to me, asked if I understood German. I told her I did, and she added, "For I wish to read you some of my poems."

She ascended the smaller platform on which M. Dall'Orta, her secretary, had arranged a low chair and installed

—a little table on which lay a large flat parcel being placed beside her.

I think one of the truest pleasures I have had in my life, and one of the most charming pictures, will be the memory of this evening with Her Majesty.

The quiet room, with its softly shaded lamps, full of the atmosphere of refinement and culture, the listening faces in bright relief, the rest in soft shadow, all attention focussed on the single gentle figure that yet dominated the room. The long flowing line of black gown, the silvery cloud of mellow-hued lace falling from the aureole of snowy hair, with the deep dark background of beautiful carved wood!

The voice rose and fell in cadences of elusive beauty, now low with quivering pathos, now rippling with mirth. One slender hand was raised to punctuate and express with gentle emphasis the lines; the eyes and lips melted in harmony, and the swift play of moods and emotions that swept over the mobile face made a poetic scene.

A little sigh of pleasure ran through the responsive coterie as Her Majesty finished in softened voice the last few lines. The Queen, assisted from the platform by M. Dall' Orsa, advanced to bid us good-bye.

As I curtsied she raised me and, drawing me towards her, kissed me twice very gently, saying: "Good-bye, dear friend, good-bye; do not forget Roumania and come back soon."

Threading her way with salutations and with sympathetic words of inquiry for many, she passed into the softly-lit apartments beyond.

M. Dall' Orsa came up to me with the parcel we had already remarked lying on the Queen's table.

I found in it, to my great delight, two photographs of Her Majesty, signed and with this beautiful *Pensée* inscribed on one: "Each of us has so much to give that we never meet in vain and so much to receive that we part with thanks."

A little book of her poems, entitled "Sweet Hours," was enclosed, and on the fly-leaf was a photogravure of Carmen Sylva standing under a lofty aisle of beeches whose slender stems lost themselves in a canopy of leaves above: this is Her Majesty's book-plate, and underneath she had written:

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

"We wander over our tombs in God's cathedral and then our feet are holy."

Born Princess Pauline Elizabeth Ottilie Louise of Wied, she inherited gifts of a high order from her parents, her father especially being a philosopher and man of letters, and from childhood they encouraged and developed her mental and moral qualities.

As a girl she was of a very lively, quick and affectionate disposition, and her brightness and charm of manner were greatly admired at the Berlin Court where she made her debut and first met her future husband.

She had always vowed she would not marry and had announced her preference for a literary and artistic life. Travel also greatly attracted her, and her wonderful gift for languages—French, English, Italian, Spanish—gave her a wide sphere of enjoyment. When she again met Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Zagharingen, in 1869, she was deeply interested in what he had to tell her of his work in far-off Roumania, to which he had been recently elected Prince. So much so, that when he proposed she accepted him gladly, feeling that here was a real sphere of usefulness, and one in which she could be of help and assistance to him in raising a country so terribly persecuted and down-trodden by the Turk in the past.

Her entry into her new home after her marriage was by the Danube and in the same Royal Barge or boat that took the Emperor of Austria and his lovely ill-fated Empress on their wedding journey.

From the day of her arrival—the threshold of her new life—the Queen endeared herself to her future people by the noble qualities of mind and heart that she possessed and the unselfish devotion to their interests that she followed all her life.

During the Russo-Turkish War, when Roumania fought so splendidly by the side of the Russian armies, she did untiring work in the hospitals, nursing the wounded and soothing the last hours of those who were facing the Great Beyond, earning the name of "Mother of her Country" by a grateful people.

A year after their marriage, a little daughter, the Princess Marie, was born to them—"l'enfant du soleil," as the

devoted parents called her. She was a lovely little thing, and early showed that she inherited all her mother's intelligence and sweet nature.

But this radiant little being was not long lent to them, and to the inexpressible grief of her parents and the nation she died in her fourth year. No other children blessed their union.

It is difficult to analyse the varied charm and attraction such a character has upon those who come under its influence. It is primarily that of purity of thought, courage and hopefulness.

Her nature, sincere and generous, accepted the trials of ill-health and suffering uncomplainingly, and it only seemed to intensify the depth of her pity and added to the compassionate nature of her charm. She was always ready to help those in distress and succour the people of the country she had taken to her heart.*

Her great solace has been work—work in every variety and form, from the devoted love and attention to the King to the inauguration and administration of her manifold charities and the relieving of those in distress.

But it is in her enthusiastic cultivation and steady allegiance to the Arts, and in the development of the things of the mind and spirit, that she found her greatest happiness. Her literary activity was very great, as a glance at the list of her published works will show.

The drama she wrote, entitled "*Mesterul Manole*," was produced in Vienna under the auspices of the Emperor, and had more than a *succès d'estime*.

The legend relates how Manole, the master builder of the cathedral of Curtea de Arges—where the King is buried—did not follow the ancient custom of immuring a living being within its walls to secure their stability. The consequence was that the walls crumbled as soon as they were built. Thereupon it was decided that the builders should immure the first person who passed that way.

This happened to be the young wife of Manole the master builder, who was bringing some fruit to the men. She was immured, to the tragic despair of her husband,

* As I write news comes of the death of Queen Elizabeth at the Palace of Curtea de Arges, to the regret of all who knew, admired and loved her.

who was away for the day and arrived too late to save her. It is said her anguished cries are sometimes heard from the old walls.

Her beautiful "*Pensées d'une Reine*," crowned by the Académie Française in 1888 in astonishingly flattering terms, show a delicate vein of satire and wit as well as a beauty of thought that commended itself to the French genius, which admires the epigrammatic style as exemplified by their great La Rochefoucauld.

"Coquetry is not always an allurement : it is sometimes a shield."

"La femme du monde est difficilement la femme de son mari."

"If we are created in the image of God, we also must be creators."

"A woman is stoned for an action a perfect gentleman can do with impunity."

"Happiness is like the echo : it answers but does not come."

"Fasting makes a devotee ; good cheer a diplomatist."

"A woman's virtue ought indeed to be great, since it has often to suffice for two."

"Duty only knits her brow at you when you fly from her ; follow her and she smiles."

"Pity is the nostalgia of a lost paradise."

"The faults of your husband or your wife are insupportable only so long as you insist on correcting them ; you should put up with them as you do the snarl of your dog, because you like him."

"One must have heart to enjoy a person's qualities, and mind to endure their defects."

"A wife has to love you, suffer in childbirth, share your cares, direct your household, bring up your family and be pretty and amiable into the bargain ; what were you saying just now about her weakness ?"

Only a short while ago the *Gazette*, in an article entitled "Queen and Poet," by Edmond Haraucourt, contains this appreciation of her Muse :

"It is thus that we see a Princess, notwithstanding the disadvantages of royal birth, and the isolation that a throne

creates, experiencing and proclaiming in the second half of the nineteenth century the ideas which are in essence those of the twentieth. That which people are but dimly beginning to divine, Governments only to conceive, and Parliaments to discuss—this voice of child, woman, queen has long sung! We see this poet-Queen, possessed during all her life with the four primordial needs of the new century—the instinctive impulse towards nature, the fever of work, the constant endeavour to mitigate the sufferings of the poor, the brotherhood of man and the appeasement of national hatreds."

Who has not read the beautiful lines written when England was mourning the passing of her great Queen? She, whose heart, shaken and bruised by the clashing din of the South African war, gave up the long and faithful vigil!

"These ever wakeful eyes are closed. They saw
Such grief that they could see no more. The heart
That quickening pulse of nations, could not bear
Another throb of pain, and could not hear
Another cry of tortured motherhood.
Those uncomplaining lips, they sob no more
The soundless sob of dark and burning tears,
That none have seen; they smile no more, to breathe
A mother's comfort into aching hearts.
The patriarchal Queen, the monument
Of soothing widowhood, of endless love
And childlike purity—the sheeps."

Let me close this brief sketch of one of the sweetest singers, and accomplished Queens of her day, with one of her own beautiful *Pensées*, a true epitome of the principles that have guided and governed her life.

"There is but one happiness—Duty;
There is but one consolation—Work;
There is but one reward—The beautiful."

XIV.

GYPSY LORE AND MUSIC.

"I have come far, led by my dream and vision."

TADORA.

ONE of the most distinctive and interesting features of the Balkan countryside is the ever-present gypsy. By woods, streams and valleys one can see their wood-fires burning, their tents pitched; and the supple, lounging men, passionate, laughter-loving women and elf-like children in multi-coloured garments—so eager to talk with the passing stranger—made a vivid picture that I always longed to paint.

The origin of these nomads has been much debated, but the generally accepted theory seems to be that they drifted westwards from Hindustan and Persia over a thousand years ago.

Sir Richard Burton thinks that the Jatts, a people of North-Western India, furnished the main stock. They, with a number of other troublesome tribes, were expelled early in the tenth century, and many authorities assert that these outcast tribes were, indeed, gypsies before leaving India—dancers, musicians, snake charmers, fortune-tellers being amongst their occupations.

The Jatts, however, were not of this class, but were renowned as a bold race of wild horsemen without religion, and notorious thieves, characteristics which accord in some way with those of their European descendants, though with regard to the first, they have long since lost their original boldness (except in horse-lifting!), only retaining their fondness for and knowledge of the animal.

Another tribe that is believed to have been expelled from India at the same time was the Dom, a pre-Aryan race, who have given their name to the gypsies of the West, the Jitt

strain having become almost entirely extinct. In India in remote times they were wanderers, weavers of mats, drinkers of spirits, and made a business of handling dead bodies and burning corpses, as was done by the gypsies in Holland and Denmark in earlier days. Like the gypsy of the present time, their hair rarely turned white and only got grey in advanced age.

The Romany Chib or gypsy language closely resembles Hindustani, and in the shape of their slender, deft hands, physical traits, manipulation of pottery and their psychic lore they further exemplify their Oriental extraction. Some very interesting links are to be seen in their language, which accentuates this. The Dom used to call his wife Domni, and the collective tribe Domnipana. Leland tells us in his book on gypsies that the letter D in Hindustani is often R in English gypsy speech, *e.g.*, Doi, a wooden spoon in Hindustani, is Roi in English Romany language. Dom would be Rom—a gypsy; Romni—a gypsy wife; and Romnipen—gypsydom. They are thus known as *Romany* all over the British Isles.

Let me mention a few words out of a very large number, which show how closely their language resembles Hindustani :

<i>English</i>	<i>Romany</i>	<i>Hindustani</i>
Lady	Rawnic	Ranee
Sleep	Sutta	Satta
Hair	Bal	Bal
Salt	Lon	Lon
Ocean	Bori-pawnee	Bura-panee
To beg	Mang	Mangna
Foot	Peero	Parow
Silver	Rup	Ruppee

In tracing the origin of the name which they are designated by in different countries, there is an interesting legend that they brought with them from the East which tells us how, owing to sorcery, a gypsy leader called Chen was made to marry his sister Guin or Kan, which brought the curse of wandering upon his people. One can see how the name Chingani (Chen-Guin) that they are known by in Turkey and Bulgaria has arisen.

It is the same story evidently as that of the Sun who

loved his sister, Kan, the Moon, and because he violated her he is doomed to follow her for ever.

The marked musical ability that one finds in the Slavonic gypsies would appear to be due to a totally different strain, and seems to link them back to the gypsy people of Persia, the Luri, a name identical with that which the gypsies of Persia are known by to-day. They were minstrels, fortune-tellers and nomads as far back as 420 A.D. Sir Henry Pottinger says that even to this day they live as they did then, and as their brothers in Europe do now, by dancing, music, the exhibition of performing bears, monkeys and necromancy. Like the English Romany, they have a king of the tribe and are notorious pillagers. There, as well as all over Europe, the lingua franca is Rom.

There was another race of gypsy caste in Persia, the workers in saddlery or leather, called Toingani, who were nomadic, and the various names Toigan, Chingani, Trigane, Zingari and Zigouner can be traced to the same origin. I am not sure about the Spanish Gitanos, but think it might be likely.

Professor Bataillard and the late Lord Avebury, after a good deal of research, came to the conclusion that the first people to introduce bronze into Europe were also gypsies, "small-handed nomadic like the Egyptians and Hindus," whose descendants, the Zietars of Polish Galicia, work to the present day in bronze. Zott is the name by which they were known to the Arabs, and one finds in the Arab dictionary the definition: "Zott, arabicized from Jätt, a people of Indian origin."

The chief home of the present-day gypsy is Europe, but they are to be found in America, Australia and Northern Africa. The greatest number of them dwell, however, in Eastern Europe, and their population is well over 600,000, while those scattered in other parts of Europe are estimated at 300,000.

In England the Romany pitches his tent near the forest or moorland and is always to be found at races and country fairs, where they figure largely as fortune-tellers or horse dealers, but in Scotland and Ireland the gypsy proper is almost extinct, though the lower castes—such as the Mugger, Mungier, Tinker or Chivodiers, as they are differently called—

are closely allied to the Romany by blood and some of his language and habits.

It is, however, in the wide land east of Vienna and from the Danube to the southern seas, that the Tsigane finds his El Dorado.

The Hungarian Czigane lead a nomadic existence, building underground huts of earth at the places where they settle, as the Gitanos of Seville do, and make a living by the sale of roughly-carved wooden utensils and implements, also beaten copper work. Their depredations amount to about the same as those of our Romanys—clothes hung out to dry, a stray chicken, or even sometimes a pig!

The men and boys wear their hair plaited and tied up in a knot over their foreheads, and when quarrelling or fighting this top knot becomes an excellent lever to throw an adversary! They are a despised and outcast race, the poorest peasant even looks down upon them as "dogs of gypsies," and the Jew, disliked as he is, is still preferred to them. They speak a language of their own and in every town have their separate quarter.

There is another tribe of Czigane—the musicians, and they are of entirely different and more superior caste to the others. No festivity is complete or successful without this gypsy band, and dancing, which is a veritable passion with the Hungarians, depends on the Czigane for the gay strains that set their feet a-twinkling. They are born musicians and their music is, for the most part, instinctive. Little, if any, formal instruction is needed, as natural endowment does all and only requires the proper medium to give it expression. Everything is learnt by ear, and if the leader—who, however, can generally read from note—starts a melody, it is extraordinary how quickly the others will pick it up and in a few minutes fall naturally into their parts with marvellous intuition. They hold their fiddles in any and every position, as well as the usual orthodox one, and follow the varying moods of their leader as if under his hypnotic sway.

An old tradition says that when one of the Czigane boys is born, he is laid on the ground with a fiddle on one side and a purse on the other. Should he move his tiny hand towards the fiddle he becomes a musician, but should it be the purse he turns to, then it is to the nomadic, thieving Gypsy caste he belongs.

Between the Serb Giganis and the Bulgarian Chingani there is very little difference.

The men are all called upon to serve as soldiers, all are taxed, those who live in the towns as well as the nomads, but it is difficult to get at the wandering ones, so they often evade it.

Their charms, cures, spells, exorcisms and love philtres are similar in both countries. But in Serbia there dwells a more poetical spirit and this has given rein to a more abundant fancy among the people. The *Verde*—nymphs or dryads, inhabiting streams, ponds or woods—beautiful white maidens with golden hair—are extremely desirous of marrying or becoming the beloved of men, for if the man be faithful she may acquire a soul. It was considered very lucky for a man to fall in love with a *Verde*, and Marko, the great national hero, was believed to have one who was always with him, guiding him safely through all his dangers and difficulties.

The seventh or twelfth son is especially favoured by the *Verde* as lovers. On the seventh day after the birth of a child, a *Verde* will appear—but to the mother only—" *Verde Ossod* " she is called, and she whispers into the ear of the sleeping child its destiny.

Nuts also seem to have prophetic powers, and are vastly fashionable among the peasantry to attract an indifferent or obtuse swain or as amulets and fetishes. The nut contains, like a seed, the principle of germination, is typical of life, and appears as a symbol in many countries; also the apple, sacred to love, wisdom and divination.

Even in far-off Scotland both are used on " All Hallow E'en "—and where could one find an occasion where more superstitious lore and Shamanistic rites were practised—to foretell the destiny and decide the fates of the rustic Jocks and bonnie Jeans!

There was an amusing Serbian song, " The old man sat on a nut, but he did not sit there long," which had a distinct music-hall flavour about it and seemed a great favourite.

In the Balkans, to meet a pop or priest the first thing in the morning is very unlucky, but a gypsy is considered the reverse. Bunches of garlic are hung outside the cottages, and sometimes put under the children's pillows at night if

they show signs of illness or fever. When hung in the open air it dries and turns black, and this is supposed to attract the evil influence and prevent it from entering the house. Even in Greece and Turkey garlic is considered a power against evil and no sailor would sail without some on board. Ulysses is said to have had some on his ship, a spray of which he carried when he landed and which saved him from Circe's magic—and one is not surprised at her ill success.

But the gypsies, though they admit its power, will not eat it as the Balkan peoples do. Red is a colour the peasants use against the evil eye, and those who find it—be it a tiny bit of wool, cloth or tape—or are given it by a gypsy, think it brings the desired happiness or love.

The Roumanian Tsigan are the handsomest of them all. They used to be bought and sold with the estates until 1855, when they were definitely released. They also are liable for military service and are taxed. They used to pay this by sifting the considerable amount of gold dust that is washed down from the mountains by the river Dimbovitza.

In Roumania, the men, like John Chinaman—that excellent laundryman of the Further East—do the washing, and curiously enough the position of worker seems reversed, for their women do the bricklaying and mason work, and the building of Bucharest is generally supposed to be laid largely to their credit.

But it is as the minstrels of these lands that they excel, and like the Geisha of Japan, the musical profession is virtually a monopoly in their hands, and it is especially their function to entertain by dance and song. Light fingered, light footed, irresponsible beings, of whom it can be truly said :

" There was a star danced
And under that I was born."

Lithe, bronzed, graceful, they are the troubadours or wandering musicians of the Eastern lands, and their music is wild and touching.

While the monk and shepherd are the lonely inhabitants of the hills, the Tsigan and peasant form the population of the plains. Where the rich grass and corn move like a

wave in the wind, along the winding road the Tsigan will pitch his tent of rags in the lush grass of the wayside.

Wherever the Jew has been, there the gypsy has been before him; but the gypsy is far the lesser evil, for the Jew is a veritable lynch in Roumania. Insatiable for money and land, they have worked with a dogged patience till they hold most of the commerce and have got such a grip on the peasant that only the iron fist of the law will make them relax their hold. Slouching along, with their small, furtive eyes, their sallow faces framed in greasy corkscrew ringlets, and clad in long, dirty caftans, they repel one as much as the gay, laughing Tsigan, with their elfin eyes, their tangled locks and many-coloured rags, attract, for the gypsy, with his mingled temperament of lazy irresponsibility and naked predatory instincts, has never lost the dignity inherited from an ancient race.

They are divided into three groups. The first live in the towns as blacksmiths, potters, cobblers; the second live near the forests and work as woodmen and sawyers; and the third are the real nomads, who wander far and wide with song, dance and magic, their performing bears and monkeys.

These latter are called "Oursari" in Bulgaria and "Racinari" in Roumania. They live upon what they can steal or earn by fortune-telling, horse dealing or what the woods and plains can offer them, and have no law beyond their own untamed desires.

They are called in by the peasants on all occasions. Music at weddings or deaths; charms and conjurings for sick cattle, drought, fever, boils or blains, and against the evil spirits in whose power the peasantry so profoundly believe.

The latter have many quaint superstitions. On Wednesdays and Saturdays no needle or scissors should be used or bread baked; the scissors might perhaps be associated with the story of the Fates and the thread of Destiny, and shears are certainly emblematic of death, but why two "off" days a week should be granted them is not known, even by the peasantry themselves.

Friday is bad for washing, a bargain, or a wedding. I may mention with respect to the latter that fifty years ago Scotland did not hold to this belief, for my mother was married with all the picturesque ceremony of olden times

on a Good Friday (the Church of Scotland did not then keep this sacred day in the same way as other countries), and it brought her no worse luck than thirteen children! Some might say that that was bad enough, but we were an exceptionally happy, jolly family, never having the unlimited spoiling or treats the modern "Hopeful" or "Apple of the eye" now has.

The swallow is a *porte bonheur*, as in other countries, and where the first is seen treasure is supposed to lie, or some piece of good fortune will happen; they are called *gălințele lui Dumnezeu*—the Fowls of God.

The spirits that haunt ruins, woods and forests are many. The *mama padura* is a benevolent one, protecting children who get lost, but the *madua muz* is an evil water-spirit, and those who gaze into the pool are sucked down into its clammy depths by the wizardry of his eyes, and the clinging weeds and grasses that quiver from his fingertips.

Another water-spirit, the *wodna zena*—the gypsies call her *nivashi**—always has tribute paid her by those who draw water from well, stream or lake, a few drops of water being poured on to the ground from the pitcher, and even before drinking this is a custom. During a drought, if rain cannot be obtained by the saints' intercession, a young gypsy girl is taken and stripped of her garments, wreaths of flowers or leaves being wound round her. *Papaluga*, as she is called, is then escorted with music through the village, everyone pouring water over her, a pleasant and cooling process for her, no doubt, but seemingly a great waste of precious liquid during a drought.

There is also *Panusck* (is this our old friend Pan again?), an amorous spirit who tries to entrap maidens in the forest. The well-known saying that a place is not big enough to swing a cat in is a current superstition of the Roumanian *Tsigan*, for when a cat wanders or will not settle the peasant is advised to swing it three times round the room. A cat is also often the first made to enter a new house or home, as it is not considered lucky to be the "first footer."

* In connection with this it is interesting to note that there is in East Africa a lake called *Nivashi*, a very beautiful one, with many tales of the spirits who dwell within it, and one wonders whether it was given this name by some of the early *ifindus* settlers.

The Tzigan have many vocations and they ply the trades of horse dealer, tinker, hawker, porter, cobbler and, above all, that of musician and the less honourable one of vagrant and thief. The "mira," or soothsayer, who is generally a woman, has great influence over the superstitious peasants. The women, especially those to be found in Roumania, are very handsome and graceful, but age early. The girls marry at fifteen, at twenty-five begin to fade, and at thirty look wrinkled old women. They live long, however, and there is not much difference in the appearance of a woman of fifty and one of eighty. They dance and sing in their youth and in their old age practise fortune-telling.

The men are of medium height, splendidly built, lithe and strong, with a muscular development that is simply astonishing, especially among the gypsies of the towns, who as porters or *hammalls* lift weights that seem impossible with incredible ease.

They profess, without practising, the creed of the country that shelters them for the time being, but change their faith as often as they change their residence from one country to another. It is believed that they practise heathen rites, but they are extraordinarily secretive, and so far little has been gleaned as to their real beliefs. The gypsies have a custom in common with the ancestor worship of the Chinese and the great body of Roman Catholics, who honour their departed on All Souls Day, for they also assemble at the tribal burial-ground to visit the graves of their dead. Their wanderings are generally so arranged as to permit the accomplishment of this purpose. Recently, a large tribe of the Western nomads gathered at Comenry in France to fulfil the pilgrimage to their tribal burial-ground there. The police were anxious to expel them, but urgent supplication was made to permit them to remain over All Souls Day, which permission was accorded.

In disposition they are cunning, somewhat cowardly and make poor soldiers. Their natures are sunny and cheerful, except when aroused by jealousy, which seems to let loose all the latent savagery of their race. Their natural intelligence is remarkable and their instincts are as keen as when many centuries ago they first wandered into Europe. All through the Continent, excepting as a musician, he is considered a pariah and an outcast, and the cleavage between

him and other peoples has rarely been bridged. In the East he finds the home of his heart, and Western Europe sees but little of him. In the towns they are given special quarters, called "mahallahs," of which the largest, perhaps, is at Sofia, a curious and picturesque spot, where these strange people, descendants of Cain, as some aver, make their winter quarters.

Wherever they are, however disguised by change of station or affluence, they can never be mistaken for any other race, and they would never wish it, for the true gypsy, despite the outcast people many think him, is proud of his blood and his mysterious, ancient ancestry.

In our times, when the natural trend of forces is to produce a more or less uniform social type out of the great mass of emigrants to whom nations such as England and America open their arms, and who grind them so quickly in the mills of their civilization that even a single generation will obliterate most traces of their ancestral nationality, it is a matter of deep interest to see a people still existing who in racial feeling and custom have never swerved from tradition and still remain what they were centuries ago.

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It is interesting in these days of advanced thought, scientific progress and general development of the world, how in elemental things like Life, Love, Birth, Death, Music, the primitive instincts which dominated our far-off ancestors still persist and permeate the emotions and ceremonies connected with them.

To whatever degree of culture the various races of mankind may have attained, music, of all the arts, seems to be the one the most genuinely expressive of the real inner man, and possesses a strange power to divest him of the outer shell of civilization and to reveal the fundamental nature inherited through centuries.

Let me picture a few scenes taken at random from different lands and races which will illustrate this.

In Colorado, by that titanic underworld of mystery and shadow, the Grand Cañon, I have listened to the Indians—to whom a paternal United States Government are endeavouring to give all the advantages of a modern education—burst forth into a majestically moving chant to the Sun God, an invocation like unto the mighty prayer the

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ancient Egyptians may have voiced centuries ago to Amon Ra, Lord of the Light and Day. . . .

I have seen another tribe, the Zuni, gather in the starlit desert round their war drum, menacing and huge as the base of a giant Californian Sequoia, to offer their savage homage to the war or thunder god. Like shadows the stealthy figures moved, the sinuous smoke from smouldering camp fires wreathing and coiling round the muttering men as they paced around the circle, each with a drumstick in his hand.

Slowly the war god roused, summoned by the insistent clamour of his worshippers, whose spirits now had leapt to flame. The voices, the throbbing blows, swelled with passionate intensity, until the sweating figures swept swiftly round the drum, shouting hoarsely. The air reverberated with the deep roaring of their blows, and finished in a thunderous boom which gradually died away. . . .

Northern Africa shows another scene. The guttural voices of dark-skinned Arabs squatting on a low divan in a dusty, lamp-lit café, lifting and ya-ooding as only Arabs can, to the thrumming strains of the plaintive *gambus*. Inside the air is fetid, close. Outside is the calm night and the soft pad of camels in the desert dust. . . .

Far away south, the tom-toms are droning in a Soudanese village near Omdurman, and the raucous wail of a pipe keeps the dusky figures swaying hypnotically in a barbarous *fantasia*. Again the hulk of an alien civilisation, put on for daily service with their masters, is cast aside and in the mournful desert music their primitive instincts are once more revealed. . . .

Outside the little bamboo house in far-away Japan, under the drooping wistaria bower, I listened to the tinkling of the *koto* and the *samisen*, played by two very progressive Japanese girls, educated at one of the leading colleges in America, but who, in the quiet of their home, would lay aside their modern garments, their Occidental music, and in softly shaded kimono would tinkle out the quaint elusive melodies of old Japan. . . .

Further out in the wide spaces of the Pacific, Hawaii would show us the beauties of her improvised melodies at a *hime* down by the surf-resounding sea on a wondrous night born of too sultry a day. These wild glees, perfect in

harmony and rhythm, yet with each singer introducing variations as he pleases! Dusky figures in native dress, brows bound with wreaths of hibiscus and tuberoses—strangely changed from the civilized man as seen in daylight. . . .

And the solitary ploughman heard on the lonely plains of Northern Spain, singing as he worked, a melody that had come down to him from ancient days straight from the inmost heart of Africa! . . .

They all, in common with the gypsy, are the minstrels of Nature herself, but the Tzigane has perhaps come closest to the heart of the great mother in voicing her various moods.

Their music, in the various lands from Hungary to the shores of the Black Sea, has very much the same characteristics and has become more or less the natural expression of the people. In each land, however, they have adopted the ancient lays and songs born of the people in the past, but interpret them in their own way.

The distinction is interesting, as an illustration of the undoubted fact that even such a nomadic type as the Tzigane is in some degree sensitive to the great law of environment, and that music, which is such a pregnant manifestation of their inmost being, is coloured by it.

The Hungarian Czigane is perhaps the best known of all the gypsy musicians of Eastern Europe. Every café in Pesth has its band, and at night the surge of their music is heard all over the city. There it is the real thing, very different to the tame, attenuated music that is called Hungarian and which one hears in a London restaurant or ball-room. The English climate, the reserved temperament of the people, seems to hamper and stifle the true manifestation of it.

In their own land it rings out with a wonderful, almost savage, vitality. Their marvellous Czardas, exciting marches and battle pieces are so emotional, so soul-stirring that one is not surprised that they were forbidden for a time, so greatly did they rouse the national spirit of the Magyar against Austrian tyranny.

The violin, "bas alja" or noble instrument, as they call it, is their chief instrument, accompanied by the cello, bass, flute, clarinet and cymbal. Their music is well known

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and very beautiful, with the melancholy strain strongly accentuated, indeed in all *Tzigane* music one perceives this characteristic, and it is said that "*Le Tzigane se divertit en pleurant.*"

Like those of their race in Serbia, Bulgaria and Roumania, they are remarkable in their self-taught art. Their violins sob out the wild strains of autumn, the melancholy of the wind, the joy of the sunlight, the welter and madness of spring, the glamour of moonlight, the hush of the dawn, the magnetic thrill of love, the fierce madness of passion and the lingering note of tragic farewell.

All moods and phases seem to flow easily from these children of the sun and laughter; but teach them, and the muse is stifled; instruct them, and their precious gift dies.

Each country has a slight but distinctly characteristic national note of its own. In Bulgarian music one notices the effect of the mixed blood, the Tartar, Slav and the Turkish influence in the race. Their *horas* are wild, with an untamed savagery about them reminiscent of their turbulent history, and are always in the minor key.

The Serbian is pure Slav. A weird, wild music, passionate and moving, with a deep undercurrent of melancholy, and their *holos* are often of a markedly erotic type.

The Roumanian *Tsigan* plays with equal fire and passion, but there is more of the softness and poetry due to the Latin temperament of the nation to be found in it, and one does not hear so insistently the note of savage pleading which marks the others so forcibly.

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Night had fallen on the little town and the narrow, winding street leading up to the gypsy café was deserted and dark. The starlight gleamed softly on the shrouded houses, with their closely shuttered faces and air of mystery.

Inside the café all was bustle and mirth. The lights were dazzling, the air stifling, and countless cigarettes and long thin cigars sent up their floating banners to the roof. In the centre sat the *Tsigan* musicians, lithe, swarthy fellows, brown of skin and hair, with sombre, glowing eyes that showed the mixed passion and melancholy of their race. Suddenly the first slow notes of music broke through and stilled the chattering room.

There is something vaguely exciting and unrestful in

this wild gypsy music—the strongly marked rhythm which surges and soars so triumphantly and ecstatically, throbbing out its passionate utterance in a *tempo* that holds the heart so closely in its thrall. Suddenly the fierce ardour dies, and slow, languid melancholy stamps out her measure of despair. All the restless voices of Nature, and of Nature in her wildest, saddest moods, seem there—the booming thunder of a savage sea, the whimpering whisper of rain-soddened leaves, the aching melancholy of night winds soothed into silence by the mystery of the dawn! Then quick come the tripping notes that raise one from a vision of grey grief—a pause—a breath!—kling-klang—kling-klang—the night is passed! the gay strain tempts and lures, Come! Come! And like a moth to the flame one's senses respond and are whirled away in the arms of a hurricane dance. The leader rises, and with body bending as a willow to the breeze, draws out the very essence of wild gypsy music from his strings. Faster and faster the magic revel swings to the climax, while one's mind, throbbing and responsive, follows its mad career with delight. A long-drawn note of sobbing triumph lingers weirdly in the air. . . . Is it a question? to me it is—for there is no answer to this beautiful, but restless, unsatisfied music. It gives no peace, no rest, but is always savagely pleading, craving, yearning.

Children of love and liberty! of a lineage that stretches out into the far past. . . . Sleeping under the stars, caressed by the night wind, they have learnt from the bosom of the Great Mother some of her jealously guarded secrets, her mysterious rites, which they carry in their own inscrutable hearts.

TURKEY.

XV.

CONSTANTINOPLE—THE DESIRED OF NATIONS.

WHO has not, at some moment of their lives, dreamed of a visit to Constantinople, the city of fading splendour and mystery! The historic gate that divides the slumbering Orient from the stirring, teeming West!

Visions of the gorgeous pageantry and pomp of the Byzantine Emperors, the tragedies and barbaric devastations which in turn swept over the proud city flit through one's mind as the word Stamboul rises to the lips, and memories of the sordid events and amazing history learnt in childhood awake and, quickening into life, throng the mind as one sweeps through the low, undulating land lapped by the salt waves of the Sea of Marmora towards the city of the seven hills.

By low fishermen's huts, pink or white French stuccoed villas, hopelessly intermingled with the old brown wooden houses of the true Turk, their closely latticed windows giving them a lifeless look, we passed to the massive walls and towers that Constantine built, and so into the portal of Stamboul.

A scarlet shimmer of many fezes brightened up the dirty station—drab in the wet morning's gloom. The raw atmosphere hung heavily under the smoke-coloured rafters of the dreary building with its crowded platform of sombre European-clad figures, and our spirits sank at the dull western look of it all! Chill and grey, it might have been Cannon Street Station in November, and carried no impression to our minds of the gorgeous East.

Suddenly amongst the waiting crowd a vision of splendour was seen; and as we descended from the train the gorgeous and stalwart "Kavass" from the British Embassy hurried forward to aid us. Mr. Lyster, of the Im-

perial Ottoman Bank, was also there, but it was on the Montenegrin that the eyes rested. Like a brilliant tropical bird, the gay red and gold of his glittering uniform—only half-covered by his rain cape—lit up the dusky scene like an exotic flower, and several dangerous-looking weapons in his girdle proclaimed his calling and responsibility. His six foot two of stature towered over the crowd; his dark eyes, fierce moustache, and the splendid swinging stride of the true mountaineer, bred on the precipitous cliffs of Montenegro, made the shouching porters and the pasty-looking civilians step quickly out of his way. These Montenegrins are always chosen as Kavass guard or personal attendant to the Ambassadors or for eminent officials, for their honesty, sincerity, bravery and devotion are unquestioned.

I remember when my brother, the late Captain Bertram Dickson, the pioneer of British Army aviation, was Military Consul at Van, near the Persian frontier, that he had a most devoted Montenegrin Kavass. He looked after his health—for he was often ill—with the tenderness and care of a woman; accompanied him on all his exploring expeditions among the fierce Kurdish tribes, when he mapped out the little-known country between Lake Van and the Tigris. He fought for him, cooked for him, nursed him through bad bouts of fever, and gave him splendid support when the rebels tried to blow up his Consulate by bombs. When my brother was on leave his letters were touching in their devotion—"Most beloved and deeply honoured Master," they began, and were full of the utmost loyalty and devoted sentiments.

Our muscular son of Ansk did not take long to clear a way for us through the dense crowd of porters and loiterers thronging the station, and in a few minutes we were in carriages, surrounded with our small luggage.

Leaving our "laissez passers" with the Kavass, our big luggage encountered but little difficulty, and was soon following us up the steep hill to Pera. Bumpety-bump, over the awful roads, with seas of mud around us and squalor and filth everywhere! Such an arrival formed no part of our dreamings, and it was a rude shock to find that skies, streets, people and sea could look so hopelessly drab and dreary. The carriage swayed uncertainly from side to side over the rough stones, spluttering mud with a

generous splash on all around, while we drew further into the sheltering depth of the hood. Our driver, with a last furious crack of his whip, landed his sweating ponies at the door of the "Pera Palace"—the big caravanserai that was to house us.

Our Military Attaché was away on leave, but had sent us a note by Pelegrini, one of the best guides in Constantinople, whom he counselled us to engage. He was a good-looking, well-groomed Greek, who only worked for the British Embassy, and had been guide to very many interesting travellers in various parts of Turkey. We had noticed him standing in the hall among the crowds of other guides and messengers waiting there, and his calm, clean, well-mannered appearance, as well as his good recommendation, decided us to engage him.

The big hall of the "Pera Palace" is as interesting, cosmopolitan and bustling as "Shepherd's" is in Cairo. The busy stir of *va et vient* goes on all day long; motley crowds of guides and messengers throng the door from morn to eve. Muscular "hamals," or porters, carry American trunks as big as wardrobes, which they toss down as easily as if they were the laundry basket! Smart Embassy carriages deposit beautifully-gowned occupants for cheery lunches, dinners and teas, while "Sadie" and "Mamie" coquet tirelessly with attachés from the American Embassy next door, and dignified Turks in frock coats and fez in attendance on visitors of distinction complete the picture.

To me, far and away the most vivid and picturesque memories of the city and life of Constantinople are embodied in the last year of Abdul Hamid's reign, before the aggressive, predatory and drab-coloured Teutonic influence had brought the once proud Turk under his heel and mastership.

Then one truly saw and realized the wonderful old city before its passing—its many shifting scenes of purely Eastern life and character, its intricate problems, intrigues, desperate adventures, plots—which made us feel that in the short space of a single night's railway journey we had been transported back into a past century, with all its mystery and excitement, but always dominating glamour.

It is of these times that I would speak, rather than of the present transitional hours, when the Sultan is but a figure-head, and the Turk grim, silent, bound body and

soul to his degenerate sons who have sold their birthright to the Hun.

As Frederic Harrison has said: "The Ottoman Empire struggles with heroic valour and murderous desperation to defend its hold on Europe, from which it is being forced back decade after decade. Still, up till to-day, the Turk holds the dominant prize of all, on which the eyes of Russia, Germany, Austria and Greece, if not Roumania and Bulgaria, are set—the wonderful Byzantine stronghold on the Golden Horn, with its northern and southern impregnable gates, and its easy transit to Asia across the Bosphorus. Constantinople indeed, with its peninsula in Thrace, with the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles, is the most crucial point in all Europe; the only impregnable stronghold, the master key of the near East, the pass between Europe and Asia." *

About four o'clock we sallied out to leave our letters of introduction and to get a glimpse of the city.

From the hotel we stepped right into the heart of Pera—into the long, narrow, bustling street that runs from Galata Bridge up to the heights crowned by the princely palaces of the Embassies, and the villas of the Pashas and Beys. Tall modern houses, offices, banks, etc., line the narrow way; low open shops, many of them no bigger than a collar, abut on to the side walk, and shelter meanly, like some cringing cat, under the eaves of some big modern building. Steep alleys slant off at irregular intervals, reminding one of bits of old Naples, with all the odours and picturesque squalor of the same; and everywhere, in the gutters, doorsteps, sidewalks, sprawl in various attitudes of listless slumber or attention the yellow pariah dogs of the city.

And how many of us who have seen that city before the march of modern progress affected it will remember that picture when other memories have passed into obscurity. They were one of the most distinctive features of Constantinople, and one of its saddest and most repellent sights. Those thousands of wretched, verminous curs, many of them almost raw with mange, uncared for, degraded, abandoned, lived on the offal and filth of the streets. They owned no master, the street was their birth-

* Frederic Harrison in *The Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1871, p. 1469.

place and habitation, and it was here they fought and died. Kicked, stoned and cursed by the callous, always hungry, sullen, and often diseased, they roamed through the narrow alleys, sluggishly nosing for scraps or crusts.

They lived in separate communities with strictly marked boundaries, known only to the dogs themselves. Their territorial rights were sacred, and swift mutilation or death was the immediate fate of the rash fellow who strayed after a tempting morsel or some fair neighbour from his own beat into that of a neighbouring pack. The packs numbered roughly thirty to forty, and had a system of protection of their own, sentinels or a "bektchi" (watchman) for the different groups, and were extraordinarily alert and wary in the defence of their territory. Strange, savage beasts! Nothing else seemed to rouse them—hunger, bad weather, kicks or suffering left them impassive—but a canine trespasser would arouse a frenzy of fury, terrific in its clamour and destruction.

There was apparently a leader to each pack, generally the biggest and strongest dog being chosen as chieftain; the pack seemed to obey his orders, for it was always he who took the initiative in attack or withdrawal. A friend told me that if a trespasser who had been set upon showed the proper signs of submission, such as lying on his back, "paws up" and tongue well out, he would be permitted to slink back to his own domain with only a few warning growls from his enemy.

The Koran forbids the slaughter of animals, so they increased at an amazing rate, and a certain rough kindness was shown them by the Turk. One would sometimes see a chair placed over a mother with her litter of pups, or a box of straw lying on the footpath so as to protect them from the passers-by, and they were fed occasionally in certain of the mosques. Then these poor wild dragged creatures showed a touch of the "dear doggie" look of humanity about them, when, with ears up and forepaws resting on a ledge they eagerly whimpered for a crust of bread, and the tail waved an unaccustomed wag of pleasure.

By day they lay sleepily about the streets, roads and doorways, and one had to pick one's way cautiously among them. They looked indolent, taciturn beasts, spending their time alternately between siestas and violent flea-

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hunts. As soon as dusk fell, however, the yelping packs quickened into life, and fights, raids and swift revenge tore the air with horrid sound. All night it continued, broken fitfully by the "tap-tap-tap-tap" of the watchman's staff as he struck the rough old pavement; "tap-tap" sounded the echo up the deserted streets, and a faint answer rang out from watchmen in the distance; "tap-tap-tap-tap"—"all's well, sleep in peace."

At dawn the scavenger appeared, a long sharp trident in his hand, and the dogs, who recognized him as their arch-enemy and the destroyer of many a tit-bit, were roused to a wild frenzy of fury; the pandemonium became an absolute torture, as district after district took up the wild chorus, and sleep was banished for a time.

From my window at the back of the hotel I used to watch two little boys come out of one of the small houses with crusts in their hands. One of them would whistle, and in a second from every corner and by-way there came a scurrying and scampering rush of the yellow and brown beasts, who crowded round with such eagerness that I feared the little fellows would be knocked down or even snapped at by the hungry animals, but apparently a wave of the arm or a sharp word was enough to keep them quiet and in order.

In Pera, the European quarter, they find life easier, as they are often fed by kind-hearted people, and bread or a bone or saucer of milk are often taken to a mother with pups, and they become very friendly and grateful for attention. But in Galata, where the Greeks and Armenians live, their life is hard, for if not absolutely cruel to them, they are callous. The Moslem faith does not permit of the killing of the dogs, so the diseased and maimed, or badly injured, drag out their sufferings till death releases them.

Many of them look very savage, and are undoubtedly so at night. Once, indeed, on returning from an afternoon drive in the country, our open carriage—a low victoria—was attacked by half a dozen big brutes in broad daylight as we drove through a village, and we only managed to beat them off at the expense of a broken umbrella, sticks and a free use of the driver's whip.

Sir Edwin Pears tells a story of a pack of starving

wolves, driven by hunger into one of the villages on the outskirts of the city, and who were set upon by the dogs, who for the moment forgot all their traditional rules of caste and boundary limit, and united together to resist the invaders, with the result that they did so very effectually, killing several of them.

They then returned to their beats, and resumed their former bickerings as usual!

Now the city lies quiet o' night, for the decree went forth that the dogs must go. The Young Turk is busy with so-called reforms: the true Moslem clings to the old ways and customs he was bred among, and resents their departure.

The story of their going is a sad one. They were collected at night in covered carts, driven down to lighters on which they were placed, and then transported to a deserted waterless island called Oxyaca, about ten miles from the city, where they were left to die of thirst. As the lighters brought in other dogs, who jumped ashore glad to be released from confinement, they were set upon by the maddened survivors, who killed them in order to quench their thirst with their blood. A month passed before the little tragedy was completed and the gruesome end to the little canine republic was brought to a close.

Little is known of their origin, and they have hardly anything in common with their European brothers. Some historians assert they were the descendants of the jackals who roamed the interior of Asia Minor, followers of the camps of nomadic Seldjukian tribes, and certainly their appearance and habits lend colour to this story. The sharp-pointed head and muzzle, the yellow-reddish coat, the bushy tail, lean shape and latent primitive savagery of the beast point to a possible jackal ancestry.

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Sunshine had succeeded a day of wind and rain, and we drove down the steep streets of Pera to Galata—the Greek and Armenian quarter—in all the brightness of a spring morning. Gradually the European cafés, the second-rate little drapers and post-card shops were left behind; the "Little Field of the Dead," with its broken tombstones, its crumbling Turkish headstands, under which the pariah dogs slept in the high, rank weeds, was passed. Through

a high-railed garden we caught a glimpse of tall cypress-trees shading an old stone seat by a low wall, and beyond it a wonderful fleeting picture of the dancing blue of the Bosphorus.

But the street narrows, traffic is heavy, and we slow up and watch the signalman at the corner tooting his little horn, to warn the people when a tram is coming. It is necessary, but not always effective, for the narrow street is thronged, and the Oriental pays but scant attention to tramcars or any regulation of his leisurely traffic.

Ahead of us lay the winding road with its teeming throng—an elbowing tangle of many races. The swarthy men with their insolent, disdainful eyes below the fez, the "hamals" sweating under monster loads, and the long string of laden mules zig-zagging down to the bridge.

The road is steep, rough, ill-paved, and the mud slowly drying in the warm sun emits a damp odour which mingles with that curious pungent smell that permeates all Eastern cities. Beggars, blind, deformed and in rags, whined at the gutter side, calling for "Bakshesh! Bakshesh!" Donkeys, almost hidden under heavy panniers filled with wood, bricks, forage or fresh green fodder, lunged stupidly into carts drawn by slow-moving oxen and plodding buffaloes, their bright grey eyes shining like jewels, while round their necks strings of blue beads were hung, to ward off ill luck and the evil eye.

We emerged from the shadow of the narrow street, and in a moment were on the Galata Bridge—the link that binds the shores of Pera to the great teeming Moslem city of Stamboul, over which lovers centuries of fanatic distrust and dislike of the Christian.

It is difficult to convey by any mere witchery of words the scene lying before us, and which has hardly changed in the space of two thousand years. Here, indeed, is the gateway to the East, guarding the passage into Asia: holding the center point of three seas, a barrier between the mighty possessions of the great white Tsar and the route to Southern Asia and the vast African continent. Well, indeed, has Constantinople been considered one of the chief prizes of the world's desire, and with truth some modern historian has declared Constantine's selection of a

site for the Eastern metropolis to have been "one of the highest inspirations of statesmanship that the world has ever witnessed."

For, apart from her wonderful commercial maritime and strategical situation, the beauty of the Bosphorus is matchless. Along the European shore stretch the long line of palaces right up to Therapia, nearly ten miles in length, their kiosks, fountains and gardens reaching to the deep water's edge.

Across the historic Straits, which at their narrowest are a bare eight hundred yards in width, stretches the Asiatic shore, seamed and threaded with quaint Turkish villages, old wooden houses, minarets and mosques, crowned by the hills with their deep-toned cypresses looking down upon the blue and foam-flecked water.

On either side of the bridge stretches the Golden Horn, laden with countless ships, sailing craft, rafts, caiques—a moving world shot with the vivid reflection of the red and brown and amber-coloured sails, the piles of green fodder, the many tints of vegetables and flowers on the laden rafts being towed across from the Asiatic shore; and over all an incessant shouting, clamour and tooting of steamers resound.

On the celebrated old bridge, whose timbers creaked and groaned noisily under the traffic, streamed an endless succession of people of many lands: squatting beggars with outstretched hands; gypsies with lustrous eyes and flashing smiles ran along beside us coaxing and wheedling; while sherbet sellers with bright metal cans tinkled their coins in the usual way to attract attention.

A couple of corpulent negresses selling nuts, oranges, dates, slippers and fancy handkerchiefs on the footwalk smiled widely with all the easy good-nature of their race as they chaffed a younger girl of twenty—slender as a young palm-tree—her lithe figure drawn up in a fine lissome curve as she raised her hand to the basket she was carrying on her head. Shuffling Armenians, long-robed Dervishes, brown-gowned Hojas,* wearing a turban swathed round their faces, black-coated officials, mixed in the moving stream of colour and life; and the laden donkeys and scraggy mules—almost invisible under their heavy loads—threaded their weary way across the bridge.

* Readers of the Koran.

Pedestrians have to pay a toll of about a penny each to cross, while the charge for a vehicle is tenpence. Numbers of people prefer to get out and dismiss their carriage, taking another at the other side if required.

Over the bridge we dipped into the labyrinthian intricacy of the old streets and bazaars of Stamboul. A wilderness of narrow, intersecting lanes and dark old wooden houses under heavy eaves, with the little open dens three feet high off the path where, among his wares, sat the endless-looking Turkish or Armenian dealer, smoking endless cigarettes before a little charcoal brazier, and seemingly with all eternity before him for gossip and the transaction of business!

But hear just once that dread cry ring out over the swarming city, "Yargın var!" (Behold a conflagration!) Listen to it as it is taken up and voiced frantically from mouth to mouth, and street to street, and one will see the Oriental move quickly enough then!

For fire is a terrible enemy in this crowded, teeming quarter, and again and again have great parts of the city been wiped out, only to be rebuilt again in the same picturesque squalor and confusion.

The network of deep, narrow streets or alleys lead one up to the great roofed-in bazaar. These streets are generally devoted to the sale of one article only. Here a street of leather-work of all kinds; there one for brasses—a fascinating place. The bazaar of beads, delightful, but not nearly as entrancing as the bead bazaar at Omdurman, where I was as dazzled as a child with their lovely colours and shapes, and crammed my bag, covered my arms, and slung chain upon chain of the enchanting things round my neck and waist! All made in Birmingham, too, and not in Germany, as my soul feared to hear! But it helped me no more than if they had been made in Timbuctoo, for I could never manage to get them in England, and apparently they are a secret and mysterious monopoly meant only to beautify the dusky Dinks maiden or other desert belle between Omdurman and Gondokoro.

The shoe bazaar was also like a little bit out of a fairy tale. Shoes of every shape and style and colour, starting with the hideous utilitarian modern black boots, hanging like dead cockroaches round the dark little den. But we

passed quickly to another little platform, where Cinderella herself might have alighted on her godmother's broomstick to choose from the gay array in emerald, rose, mauve and cardinal, embroidered in gold, silver or pearls, and with dazzling little silk ponpons bobbing over the curled-up toes! And the babies and children's shoes—adorable!

On the opposite side a grave, long-bearded Turk waved his hands smilingly towards his stock as our delighted eyes fell upon them. They consisted of the soft leather slippers that the men wear indoors: just the thing to slip on when greeting the chilly morn in grey England, or for bidding good-night to a tired and departing day. There they lay in all shades of lemon, amber, powder blue and cinnamon: such soft nuances of colour! Hastily I racked my brain, trying to remember the sizes of various friends, and longed to buy a dozen at least as gifts.

Within the big roof-covered bazaar one finds the stalls for old Eastern, Persian and Turkish rugs and carpets, and many a treasure can be picked up here, given the time and capacity for understanding the leisurely Oriental method of bargaining, and the drinking of innumerable small cups of Turkish coffee.

Embroideries, silks and satins from Brussa, shawls, crêpe yashmaks or scarves, stitched and worked in gold and silver: bangles, saucers full of precious stones, attar of roses in fanciful long bottles with a quaint design of gold upon them; watches, necklaces, amulets, earrings of all kinds—among which I picked up a lovely old pair—diamonds set in the old Turkish style; carved jade and crystal ornaments, weird but beautiful, wrapped in soft old rags smelling of the Far East, were brought out from little boxes hidden in the background, and laid out for our inspection and admiration. But diverse and enchanting as were the articles we saw here, I liked the little, narrow, open street bazaars the best. They were more truly of the East in type and colour than the big "Marché," which, but for its contents, resembled too much the ones of Western Europe.

Up the steep hill of Stamboul we climbed, with all the colour and life of the Orient around us, past the little Street of the Pillars, moving hastily on to the side-path to let a string of laden camels pass, their waving necks

close to our shoulders, and their eyes, supercilious and contemptuous, glancing from side to side. Outside the little Turkish cafés many an idle fellow sat basking in the sun, sipping his thick coffee, smoking and telling stories all day long.

On the roadside squatted a blind fortune-teller calling out in a sing-song voice a refrain which, translated, ran, "As the wind and waves weave patterns on the sand, so by the will of Allah can thy destiny also be traced."

From the low wooden box at his side he took some of the sand, which he sprinkled in front of him. Breathing deeply upon it till it stirred and moved, he wrote some cabalistic signs with a pointed stick, and lo! your future was disclosed, at the cost of three-halfpence!

Boot cleaning is a very much favoured profession here, though one fails to see how it can be made a supporting one. Their boot-boxes are magnificent, made of wood and enamelled brilliantly in black or darkest brown. They are adorned and nearly covered with fascinating brass ornaments of every design and size, and they glitter like gold in the sun.

The shoeblick is a true artist and can give points to any Western confrère or New York "shine." He first attacks the boot with a little brush and pointed steel instrument, carefully removing every atom of dust and mud; then the blacking is applied. None of the simple Western method of a dab in a bottle and brush is entertained here, but with a variety of implements reminiscent of a beauty parlour or manicurist he of Stamboul undertakes his task.

Then comes the dazzling polish, and one thinks it is about time to fish for the fee from the depths of pocket or purse; but no, this seemingly brilliant effect is apparently only ground-work, and he proceeds to develop high lights by means of a queer yellow cream and drest polishing. If you are impatient, or do not understand the perfection of polish aimed at, and withdraw your foot before the artist soul is satisfied, a little tap with his brush on his boot speedily brings the boot to heel again!

At the top of the hill we emerged on to the dusty square on which stands the wonderful mosque of S. Sophia, built by Constantine the Great, A.D. 325.

Many vicissitudes have fallen upon this once-beautiful shrine. Thrice has it barely escaped destruction by fire and earthquake. Twice had the great dome fallen in before it was rebuilt in A.D. 548 by Justinian, with all the glory and beauty possible.

From the exterior it is a disappointing sight. Clustering round the dusty base are rickety booths, mean shops, schools, beggars, dogs, and all the dirt and laziness of Eastern life. The walls of brick look ugly, and the minarets ungraceful seen from below.

After the usual endeavour to get shoes to fit, we shuffled into the church with the dirty, boat-shaped abominations on our feet, the attendants following us with eyes full of the latent distrust and suspicion that all foreigners encounter in entering their mosques.

The impression comes quickly of the immense space and fine balance of one of the acknowledged masterpieces of architectural art. Around the nave the double rows of arched pillars, the mystic one hundred and seven in number, support the women's gallery, and it is from here that one gets the full effect of the vast size and form of the church. The great dome poised above unites two smaller domes, which in their turn join three cupolas, thus leading up in gradual ascent to the highest summit of all.

Apart, however, from its immense size, which impressed me, nothing appealed to me here. It was too light, too bare, too monotonous. I missed the long lines of dim perspective, the softened light that leads the thoughts towards the mystic world of prayer. The slovenly matting which no shade concealed, the trivial "nimber," or pulpit, the dirty, ragged flags that hang on either side, the white-washed half-effaced figures of the once golden and opal-tinted seraphim, saints and Madonnas, the obliterated beauty of colour on the walls—such is the change wrought by the Moslems on one of the greatest glories of the Christian Faith.

* * * * *

Close by is the infinitely more beautiful Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, with its gilded domes and wonderful slender minarets, pointing like spears to the blue heavens above. Built in 1556, it is a most perfect example of Osmanli architecture; designed on the same principle as

S. Sophia, it yet exceeds it in beauty, and the eye rests with pleasure on its fine Saracenic style.

The four gigantic monolithic columns support the screen under the lateral apices of the dome, the latter being seven metres higher than that of S. Sophia. On it is also inscribed, "God is the light of the heavens and the earth." The whole atmosphere here was more softened, more quieted, more cooled. The light fell softly from windows of fine old glass, shading with a tender touch the long line of masonry; the dignified "muderris" or priests, surrounded by the "softas," were reading the Koran, and the turbaned Turks sat immovable before the "mihrah."

No hard, diverging line of civilization is crossed as one emerged into the sunny, dusty square. The same men sit under the slowly-budding trees, sipping the fragrant coffee before the queer old wooden houses as in ancient times.

Under a plane-tree stands a long-bearded Turk in turban and robe, shaving the head of a small boy who sits cross-legged on a stool; a sleek cat follows the vendor of cats'-meat until stopped by a purchaser, who carries the purchased tit-bit on a spear of wood, and the cat, purring, noses the hand of the vendor and gently dabs it with a soft paw in insistent demand. A Levantine hums a melancholy air as he stirs a tin of steaming rice on a gaudily-painted wooden stand, and a swarthy boy, almost hidden under his shoulder-load of sponges, drinks a cup of the hot brew.

The soft, padded footfall of a magnificent desert camel and its protesting grunt is heard, as its leader ties it to a corner, then with simple faith and dignity makes his ablutions before entering the mosque. Close to the mosque doors a crippled, sightless beggar murmurs, "Bismillah Rahmin, Rahmin"—(In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate), as he raises a trembling hand for alms. Opposite, on a rough, wooden bench, two old Turks, with heads nodding drowsily, sit dreaming in the sun, and behind and around us the muted significance and decay of this immortal city sink into the mind. . . .

Through the maze of old streets we wandered; here, a lovely little fountain, with the faint beauty of its arabesques in gold catching the sunbeams; there, an ancient tomb enclosed in railings, its delicate chiselling almost submerged under the green, climbing weeds; then back again to the

beautiful Mosque of Suleiman, whose domes and exquisite minarets seem to soar to the eternity of blue overhead.

An old Turkish proverb runs thus: "To the Greek wealth, to the Circassian beauty, to the Frank learning, but to the Osmanli majesty"; and it is in these great embodiments of her faith—for it has been beautifully said that the great cathedral is but the religious emotion expressed in stone—and in the unalterable character of the great past of her people, that the truth of this lies. Turkey has no national monuments beyond these great mosques and palaces. Her history is her supreme memorial, vivid, majestic, all-conquering in the past, and her record has shown half Europe her vassal and under her sway.

From Constantinople, Skutari, lying on the Asiatic hills, looks a city of enchantment, but nearer acquaintance dispels the illusion. The town seems crumbling into ruin; the streets are filthy, with great holes and ruts in them that cause the creaking, seedy carriage to sway and jump and roll like a ship in a storm; the dogs look more wolfish and starving even than in Constantinople; and the beggars, indolent and blind, swarm everywhere.

Crossing the Bosphorus, we toiled laboriously to the top of a steep and stony hill, until we came to the "Great Field of the Dead," the Moslem cemetery, with its groves of dark cypresses, for every Turk desires to have a cypress planted near his grave.

We stopped as a funeral approached and passed us. The lid of the coffin was carried at the head of the cortège, and as in most of these Eastern countries of Europe, the face of the deceased was exposed to view—often a book is laid in his hands. A wailing chant or sing-song verse of the Koran was recited as they passed into the cemetery.

As they came up the hill, and moved through the long paths of the cemetery, various changes were made among the bearers of the coffin. I was told that it was considered a pious act to help to carry a coffin, and many claimed the privilege of doing this during the journey to the grave, strangers even stepping out from among the onlookers and shouldering the burden for a short distance.

The Turks believe the soul to be in a state of unrest and torture during the period between death and burial—hence

the dead are buried at once, and a funeral procession is taken at a great pace. Some have even asserted that only on such an occasion is a Turk ever seen to move quickly!

They do not bury the bodies in the coffins, and arrived at the grave-side, the corpse is taken out of the coffin and laid in the ground, and a board is placed over it to prevent the earth pressing on the body. The tombs are made of marble or stone, and are surmounted by a carved turban for the man, for the woman, a palm branch.

They look deserted and neglected; the headstones of the poorer ones were toppling over in all directions; many of the tombs were broken and yawning, and weeds and rank grasses were everywhere. We saw several groups of women resting near the graves of those they loved, but the graves themselves looked untended and neglected.

The Turk likes to have his dead near him, where he can visit them, and on every bright day one will see parties of women making for the cemeteries, where they sit beside the tombs of their relatives with their children playing round them, spending often the whole afternoon there chattering and basking in the sun, to them a by no means mournful visit.

In Stamboul are distributed the many "Turbeks" (or burial-parlours—as a Yankee friend called them) of the various Sultans and their families. Inside the cupola-shaped edifice we found a carpeted room, the windows with rich cornice hangings, and an enormous cut-glass chandelier swinging from the centre of the dome.

The roof-shaped tombs were covered in gold-embroidered velvet and draped with handsome shawls. At the head of the Sultan's tomb rested his *lex*, with diamond clasp and plume. Around him lay his Sultana, wives and children. Fine candlesticks and Koran-stands holding beautiful Koran MSS. were distributed about, from which the "turbek" guardian reads prayers for the repose of their souls each day. Quiet, peaceful rooms, they give no suggestion of death or decay, and contrast strangely, in the light and warmth of their interiors, with the frozen gloom of the Western mausoleums.

We sat down under a Judas-tree with its buds just showing. The legend which has given rise to its name says that Judas hanged himself upon one of these trees, and when his

blood gashed forth it stained the white flowers the purplish-pink colour they now are.

A shepherd passed us with his flock of long-tailed sheep, among which were many black ones. It was just like one of the Bible pictures ; the thin, olive face with melancholy eyes, the slender body clad in short, ragged tunic showing the long bare legs, and the drab cloth wound round his head. He walked in front of his sheep, who followed him, his staff in his hand, and three dogs following behind.

At the top of the Skutari ridge stands the Crimean cemetery, where the English, French and Italian colonies bury their dead, and where so many of our brave soldiers who met their death by wounds and sickness during the Crimean War now rest in peace.

We alighted and passed through the gate, over the beautifully-kept greensward to the graves and the monument which commemorates the deeds of the fallen. It was eventide, and the sun was setting over the hills that lie at the back of Constantinople, tipping the mosques and minarets of the old city with flame, and laying long shafts of rose-colour and gold on the great stretch of waters at our feet.

Here in God's Acre all was peace. The monument erected by Queen Victoria to the fallen towers above the others, and the inscription is in four languages, English, French, Turkish and Sardinian. Dear English flowers, planted by careful hands, were blooming on the quiet graves. Each headstone held its name and valiant record.

Ah ! how many distant countries, deserts and rocky shores hold in silent keeping these lonely resting-places ! Britain never called her sons in vain. From the remotest corners of the great world they have answered the Motherland's appeal. Far and wide they have striven ; East and West they lie. . . . Brave heroic souls who have dared and died in alien lands for honour, right and justice.

" Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead !
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away ; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth ; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy and that unhop'd serene
That men call age ; and those who would have been
Their sons, they gave, their immortality."

RUPERT BROOKE.

Down by the ragged fringe that divides the slumbering Orient from the stirring West—the sandy, sinuous line of Asia Minor—strange orgies of religious frenzy prevail. A wild appeal, a savage inspiration seems a necessity—a purging of soul and nature—to these fanatical followers of Allah who flock into the "Tekkés," or monasteries, where they can unbridle their unrestrained religious fervour to the utmost.

Of the two monastic orders—the "Mavlevi," or whirling dervishes, the "Rufai," or howling dervishes—the latter are by far the most savage and fanatical in their devotions, and their ritual is an astounding spectacle.

The Rufai have their "tekke," or monastery, at Skutari, while the Mavlevi are at Pera. These dervishes are the monks of the Modern faith, and wear a monastic habit and conform to the rules of their order.

A sharp contrast was struck as we passed through the shabby, untended garden into the gloom and darkness of the rough wooden hall attached to the monastery and mosque. Our eyes, however, soon accustomed themselves to the gloom, and we could see over the low parapet, which divided us from the dervishes, that the service had begun. The dim green of the Mihrah glowed faintly in the dusky gloom. Crud-looking knives and instruments of torture used by the dervishes at the great feast of Bairam were suspended round it, and two old flags of soft, faded colour hung upon the walls.

The Sheikh, in black robe, wearing the green turban which proclaims the pilgrim to the Holy Tomb, sat under the Mihrah, and the scented clouds of incense played round the pale face and sombre figure, giving it a mystical remote aspect. The luminous eyes proclaimed the visionary, and the nervous, delicately-formed hands waved slowly to and fro as he droned some words from the Koran in a monotonous, chanting voice. His body swayed backwards and forwards in measured swing, while the packed circle of squatting dervishes accompanied their chief in the droning chant.

From time to time a new-comer would arrive, prostrate himself before the Mihrah, kiss the Sheikh's hand and retire beside the ranks of the dervishes.

A big negro sat in front of us, his guttural accents dominating the others. The room was stifling, and when he rose and stalked out we thought he had had enough of it; but what was our surprise to see him return with a lovely, flaxen-haired little girl of three in his arms! He crept into his place, and nursed the little child very tenderly as he took up his chant again. The little thing was as good as gold, and sat silent on his knee, absorbed in the people and queer scene around her. The negro stopped once to wipe a very necessary nose, which she resisted with her fists, but she uttered no sound.

Twenty minutes passed while the unvarying sound continued; then they rose and, standing shoulder to shoulder, changed the rhythm. The negro took the child out, and returned in a loose thin black coat, his white cap still on his head. A young officer in uniform and a black-coated official also joined the ranks of swaying, droning men. They swayed from right to left, bowing backwards and forwards at a gradually increasing rate—the Sheikh accelerating and punctuating the pace by an occasional quick stamp of his foot. The room got closer and closer, the breath began to come heavily and pantingly from the reeling men, great drops of sweat rolled down their faces, distorted with fanatic passion, the lips curled cruelly as the throbbing syllables, "La ilah illa 'llah," burst spasmodically yet in wondrous unison from their parched throats. The negro, towering above them all, had let loose all the wild religious passion of his race, and with eyes rolling in delirium he spat the words from his lips in a fearful frenzy of abandonment. . . . The cries rose higher and higher, till the air throbbed with the hoarse, sobbing sounds. A drum beat somewhere, and added its boom-boom of bass to the gasping voices. . . . Like a dreadful wave the line of men swayed and tossed and moaned; little flecks of foam had gathered round the lips of some of them, and the young officer looked in the last stage of collapse.

We could bear it no longer . . . it looked like a glimpse into the faces of the damned. . . . With hearts beating quickly we gained the open air. . . .

We drew deep breaths of the fresh, sweet air, after the overpowering excitement and atmosphere of the stifling mosque, and raised our eyes with relief to the brightening

day as though to sweep the frowning scene away. Overhead it had been gloomy all the day, but now it had cleared from dull grey to soft shades of lemon and silver, and at our feet the wonderful city shone in the hesitating sunshine. To our left stretched the pale waters of the Bosphorus; sombre cypresses stood out darkly on the hills, which sloped till they met the long line of desert horizon. Pink-and-white houses and soft-toned mosques gleamed like opals in the mellow light.

Ahead of us the silver streak of water, spanned by the old bridge with its fretwork of brown masts, shot faintly by the colours of the moving caïques, bathed the base of Stamboul, which lay with a soft purple mist at her feet. The luminous haze from the darkening sea touched into delicate shades of sable and silver the crouching lines of myriads of old wooden houses down in the packed quarter by the bazaar. Up on her heights the domes and lancets of the beautiful Süleiman Mosque emerged from the faint indecision, silvery grey against the sky, whose soft clouds were changing to rose and lavender.

One's eyes swept forward to the romantic beauty of Scagli Point—place of love, mystery and despair! What haunting tragedies linger in the now-peaceful gardens, shaded softly by the solemn grove of the cypresses! What memories must it hold of the fifteen centuries of pomp and beauty it once boasted! At its feet lap and ripple the waters of three seas. Neglected and forgotten lie the gardens in the sun. Deserted and silent stand the kiosks, once homes of so much vain beauty and desire, whose walls preserve in jealous keeping the memories of bygone laughter or of tears. A city immemorial! Relentless, in her great traditions, she stands, a magnificent ghost of the past, pathetic, yet still deeply inspiring in her majestic decay.

XVI.

A DETHRONED DESPOT AND THE YOUNG TURK.

HOW strange it is to *think of* that once-arrogant and mighty Sultan, Abdul Hamid, as a being now of little account ; living an obscure life of semi-imprisonment in a remote village far from the great city and palaces where he wielded such tyrannical sway, and where millions shrank in fear of his power ! History has undoubtedly recorded many a fall from power such as this, but to those who witnessed the impressive pomp of the Selamlik, the tumultuous cheers of his troops during the final weeks of his reign, few would have believed in such a probability.

The Selamlik, or weekly visit to prayer, was the solitary and only occasion when he emerged from his fortified solitude and showed his face to his people. Permission for foreigners to view it could only be got through one's Embassy, and one had to be personally known and vouched for by one's Ambassador.

At eleven o'clock we drove up to our Embassy, and were joined there by Sir George Barclay, the cheery, delightful Councillor, now our Minister at Bucharest, and whom we had known in happy past days in Japan, when he was First Secretary there, and his wife and I vied with each other in collecting the tiny little old blue-and-white china boxes of every design and shape, which are getting so rare.

With the resplendent Montenegrin kavass on the box-seat beside the immaculate English coachman, we rattled through the dirty streets of Pera, catching glimpses of companies of soldiers and cavalry ahead of us, on their way to the Palace. Other magnificent kavasses on Embassy carriages and mounted aides-de-camp passed along the road beside us.

Climbing a rise in the road, we passed a huge pretentious barrack-looking place : the sentry with Prussian eagle on

his helmet proclaimed it the German Embassy—"that arrogant hill-top palace whose eight spread eagles appear to boss the Bosphorus!" Quite near it is the Dolma Bagtché Palace, which Abdul Aziz and Mourad V. successively occupied. Dolma Bagtché—a literal translation of which means "Rose garden"—is effectually screened and protected from the road by walls forty to fifty feet high, but through the gates we caught a glimpse of charming gardens sloping to the water's edge, and many palms. It was in this palace that Abdul Aziz was deposed in 1876, and, with fifty-two head-loads of his wives, was deported to the Seraglio.

A dirty village lay at the bottom of the hill, typically Turkish in its squalor. Outside the little cafés were sooty straw-stuffed divans, upon which men were already squatting, smoking the *marghilah*, and surrounded by groups of mangy dogs.

It is curious so wretched a village should exist so close to the Imperial Palace, but an old Turkish proverb runs: "It is wiser to live near the fire than the Sultan," and most of his better-class subjects have deemed it safer to keep at a distance.

In another few minutes our cabs were breasting the hill that leads to the mosque, and we came to an abrupt standstill in the midst of lined ranks of soldiers, just outside the Palace of Yildiz Kiosk, opposite the white mosque where the Sultan would shortly worship. The great walls, fifty feet high, hid everything with the exception of one long wing of the Palace, which broke through it and topped the hill, and projecting a little from it was the pavilion reserved for Royal guests and the Diplomatic Corps. A pretty strip of lawn lay in front of it, and we entered through the handsome wrought-iron and gilt gates, up a short flight of stairs. Another room, with separate entrance, was reserved for the general company who had secured permits from their Embassies to view the ceremony, and we could hear from our balconies the high-pitched voices of many of Columbia's daughters.

The big reception-room of the Diplomatic Corps, into which we were ushered, was sumptuously decorated; the walls were covered with crimson brocade and gorgeous mirrors, and there were many red-and-gold sofas and

divans about. Three very large French windows opened on to the terrace, which overlooked the square and mosque.

The room was full, and all the Embassies were well represented, especially the German, for the Grand Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, with their suite, were there, visiting Constantinople as guests of the Sultan. They were already here in full dress, for they were to be received by His Majesty after the Selamlık. The splendid uniforms and orders, the fine gowns of the ladies, intermingling with the frock coats of high Turkish officials wearing the bright red fez, made a charming scene. We were soon introduced to most of those present, and a bright, animated half-hour was spent in conversing and watching the scene outside.

Secret police, ostensibly the attendants of the Palace, threaded their way about the room. They looked with great suspicion at my big "Grannie" muff with its long fox-tails, and I am sure sinister thoughts of a concealed bomb were in their minds, as they watched me closely, for later I found one of these gentlemen beside me, and when I laid it down for a moment he at once took it up, and I knew he was feeling it!

Among the many interesting people we knew and chatted with were the Austrian Ambassador, the Marquis de Pallavicini, the doyen of the *Diplomatic Corps*, and his charming English wife. Broad-minded, intellectual, and with a spontaneous charm of manner that was very delightful, they contributed greatly to the enjoyment of our stay in Constantinople. They had been there many years, and there was little in modern Turkish politics or diplomacy that His Excellency had not fathomed. We spent many delightful hours with them at the Embassy, or on their yacht, sailing up the Bosphorus to take tea at their pretty summer palace at Therapia. Prince Hohenlohe, witty Count Badeni (devoted to English sport and life), the Limburg Stirrums and Count and Countess Duka—the latter a relative of poor King Alexander of Serbia—were generally of the party, and it always was a merry one.

The German Ambassador, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, was another whose personality impressed me always, and whom I enjoyed talking to. In appearance, he was a powerful-looking man, well over six feet in height and very

broadly built. His features were rugged, and his manner very stolid and unexpansive, but there was a latent twinkle in his eye that broke out occasionally, and which counteracted the stern impression given by the massive jaw and rather severe aspect.

He possessed a strong will, boundless mental energy, and a shrewd discernment that was one of the qualities that built up the extraordinary German influence over Turkish affairs which is so predominant to-day. In talking with you he was very earnest, and seemed to devote his whole attention to the subject he was discussing. He told me he liked English country-life very much, and seemed to know London in its various aspects well.

Like M. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, Baron Marschall thought the worst lot of England was the Channel crossing, which he said had never been friendly to him—an unintentional but curiously symbolical forecast of the rôle the Channel would play for us in this war.

Baron Marschall did not live to see the fruits of his work and influence on the history of Constantinople, or its participation in the great war, but if I remember rightly, he was with his bombastic master during his visit to Jerusalem a few years ago ("For the salvation of our soul," as he announced) when the Kaiser made a speech to this effect: "Allied as I am with my good friend, Abdul Hamid, Padi-shah of 225,000,000 Mohammedan subjects, Turkey, in combination with my grand army, need have no fear if the whole world combine against us."

The Baroness was a grave, tall woman, rather like the wife of an English bishop in appearance. She was slender for an elderly German, and was a little prim in her bearing and dress, but she had a pleasant smile and manner.

Nidjeh Pasha and Ferid Pasha were also two very interesting men, the latter especially so. He was a pure Albanian, and a very distinguished, good-looking man: tall and slender, with dark eyes, under very well-marked eyebrows, his dignified and courteous manner gave him an air of breeding and race which was part of his natural inheritance. He was Governor, or Wali, at Konia before becoming Grand Vizier to the Sultan—an office he held several times. He was a man of much ability and tact, and was greatly

liked by all the Ambassadors, while at the same time retaining the confidence of his suspicious and exacting master. When Abdul Hamid was deposed, he became Minister of the Interior, under the New Régime.

He had several good-looking sons, whom we saw a good deal of later in Switzerland, when their father was there for his health. His daughter, the Princess de Vlores, to whom he was greatly attached, was a very charming girl, with big dark eyes, wavy black hair and the tiniest hands and feet : a charming type of a high-born modern Turkish lady. His eldest son had married the Khedive of Egypt's daughter, and was driving with him in Constantinople (just before Turkey joined Germany in the great war) when a bomb was thrown at their carriage, injuring young Ferid, though the Khedive himself escaped.

While we had been moving about, chatting with our various friends, coffee and cakes, tea and sherbet were being served in an inner room. The coffee was served in very fine egg-shell china cups, each one lying inside a gold outer one called "*zari*," richly chased and encrusted with jewels. Sandwiches on gold trays were handed round by Imperial servants wearing the *lez*.

From the windows it was a stirring picture that our eyes rested on : thousands of troops lined the roads, and all the avenues and heights around. From every side fresh companies and regiments were approaching, the rhythmic thud of their feet and the rattle of arms punctuated by sharp words of command. Stalwart, picturesque-looking troops from Albania, a fine green-turbaned regiment, and many others too numerous to mention were there, many of them mounted on most superb horses—beautiful delicate-limbed creatures, a joy to behold.

As far as the eye could discern, nothing but soldiers were to be seen, for no civilian or *stranger* is allowed to venture near this district on a *Seiamlik* day, and all the approaches are carefully guarded. It was a fine shimmering mass of colour, the grey, white, blue, red and gold of the uniforms glittering and melting imperceptibly one into the other, and behind it all the wonderful misty line of the Bosphorus and the faint purple hills of Asia. At the foot of the Palace hill, round the gates of the mosque, were gathered all the great Pashas, Viziers, Ministers, etc. of the

State, awaiting on foot the arrival of their master, their breasts an emblazoned mass of decorations.

From one of the Palace gates emerged His Highness the Grand Eunuch of the Imperial Harem, closely followed by his servants. He was an enormous, powerfully-built negro, if possible more hideous than his subordinates, and held the attractive title of "Guardian of the Gates of Felicity."

In past times the power wielded by this official was immense. Cognizant of all the jealousies and intrigues of the Harem, fomenting or allaying them as it suited his purpose, he was the chief confidant and witness of his Royal Master's most intimate life and actions, and his influence, paramount in the Harem, often extended to affairs of State. But modern times have changed much of this, and little but the great prestige of office now remains.

Suddenly, over the chattering, laughing room, a musical cry rang out, wafted on the vibrating air from the stately minarets opposite, and amid the sudden hush of the throng we heard the silver tones of the *muezzin*—thrilling in their strange harmonies—calling the faithful to prayer. "The most beautiful voice in Constantinople," murmured a young attaché, as we gazed at the tiny atom of black outlined against the dazzling spire, sending his musical chant out to the armed and waiting thousands below. A moment of expectant attention, broken only by the impatient movement of the horses, and then the great gates of Yildiz opened, and a brightly-coloured stream of State officials poured out, followed by several carriages, and a swift glimpse was caught of some of the ladies of the Harem in pink and grey "*seridjeh*" and closely veiled, with some of the younger sons of the Sultan—a big ugly eunuch sitting beside each coachman. Several officers of State, superbly mounted, followed, the glossy coats of their beautiful steeds shining like satinwood or mahogany.

A brief pause—the silver shrilling of a trumpet—and then an open victoria drawn by a pair of magnificent grey stallions drove slowly round the bend amid the cheering of the soldiers: "*Padishahmyz, teklik, yacha!*" (Long life to the Padishah!) The carriage moved down the hill very slowly, and we had ample opportunity to notice the single black-robed figure that occupied the wide seat of the victoria.

In front of him sat one of his generals in magnificent uniform and orders.

There was silence as the carriage passed below the terrace, every lip still, every eye fixed on the figure it contained. Abdul Hamid was sitting erect, a slight, short figure with a weary-looking droop of the shoulders, but this impress of fatigue was counteracted by the energetic poise of the head, firm, secure. The complexion was pale and heavily lined, the beard black notwithstanding his advancing years, for the Moslem Faith insists that the supreme head of religion must never betray the ravages of time. There was power in the eyebrows and aquiline nose, but the heavy eyelids gave no indication of the mind they covered. The whole expression was reticent and inscrutable.

As he passed, the sombre lids opened and the eyes flashed a glance of extraordinary scrutiny over our faces. Not one but seemed to have met that subtle, penetrating look, not one had escaped that swift inquiry! Up through the gardens, past the waiting group of high officials, the carriage rolled, to stop at the door of the mosque. The black-coated figure descended—a single note of simplicity amongst so many gorgeous uniforms—and with quick sure steps entered the building.

Prayer occupied but a brief interval, and the troops, mounted as well as those on foot, had now turned and were all facing the mosque, where their great ruler was at prayer. Two of the young Princes emerged from the door of the mosque, standing erect and rigid, awaiting their father's reappearance. A thrill of life and movement passed through the compact lines of men as they swung into position, and the bands struck up the gay and inspiring strains of the "Hamidié March" as the Sultan emerged and walked quickly down the steps into a phaeton, drawn this time by a pair of matchless bays, and gathered the reins into his hand as the favourite son, Burhaned-din, took the vacant seat beside him.

The phaeton, driven by the Sultan and with the hood half raised, rolled up the hill, and once more that veiled yet penetrating eye flashed its look of command and interrogation along our ranks. Close behind and around the carriage struggled at a feverish pace portly pashas, dignified beys, courtiers and officials of every description, running, gasping

and panting in their endeavour to keep pace with the Royal carriage and show the depth of their deference and devotion. It was an amusing sight for the comfortably situated on-lookers, but must have been desperately trying for some of the fat, grey-bearded old fellows who had to take the steep hill at such a run! The carriages and coupés of the Harem followed, and all were soon lost to sight behind the great walls of the Palace.

This was the scene that for thirty odd years of his reign had been enacted every Friday—the single solemn appearance of the Sultan on his way to prayer; the symbol for many millions of the incarnate power and majesty of the Khalifate.

Born in 1822, the second son of Sultan Abdul Mejid, his mother was a beautiful Circassian slave, who died of consumption shortly after his birth, the same malady carrying off his father at the early age of thirty-nine.

In Turkey the heir to the throne is brought up in great seclusion, and this, added to the natural traits of reserve and suspicion and fear, made Abdul Hamid an austere, reactionary, intriguing autocrat, and a bitter antagonist of the views of the Young Turk party.

He accomplished one noteworthy reform, however—the cruel custom of strangling infant nephews at birth, in order to secure a direct succession, until then a State law, was suppressed; an evidence of humanity on his part for which honour is due.

Shortly after his accession he removed from the Dolma Bagiché Palace, where he did not feel secure, to Yıldiz, which lay farther outside the city, and in a position of greater security on the heights overlooking the Bosphorus.

His predecessor, Abdul Aziz, was a Sultan of the traditionally Oriental potentate order, an indolent, luxurious and corrupt despot. His harem contained 1,200 of the most beautiful women of his Empire, and his Palace needed 6,000 officials to sustain and administer its useless and extravagant splendour.

Yıldiz can hardly be called a Palace, in the ordinary sense of the word; it is, more properly speaking, a vast collection of buildings resembling a strongly-fortified city. Originally a littleiosk built by his father, the Sultan, to

gratify the whim of a favourite slave called Yildiz (Star), its beautiful position and comparative isolation appealed to the nervous terrors and desire for solitude of the Sultan. In altering and building it to suit his extensive household, no dominant idea or fixed plan was followed, and the result has been a curious mixture of the modern and the older styles.

Abdul Hamid had what we familiarly call the craze for bricks and mortar, and was continually building and altering; very superstitious, he believed the saying, "As long as a man builds he lives," and a perfect army of builders and architects were always kept busy at the Palace. An enormous wall fifty feet high surrounds this immense domain, and some way within this has been built yet a second one, twelve feet in depth, strongly fortified and guarded and with iron gates that will only open outwards, a precaution against the place being rushed in time of rebellion.

Within this impassable circle of wall the Sultan lived. The principal residence is a pretty little chalet-like structure of wood and consists of twenty-four rooms. Close beside it, and really communicating with it, is the other kiosk erected after the terrible earthquake of '94. It is made of cement, and rests on a rock, so that when here there is no danger from either fire or earthquake. Adjoining it is the Harem—a vast building with many smaller ones attached to it, and where hundreds of women pass their lives in luxurious and enervating monotony.

Outside the inner circle, and inside the great outer wall, lie the many kiosks, gardens, conservatories, parks, museum, theatre, menagerie, stables and the countless shops and tiny factories for the production of the various articles necessary for the maintenance of this miniature city. For without counting the seven thousand soldiers quartered within the walls, and which form the Imperial guard, there were at least five thousand souls who spent their entire existence within this guarded enclosure.

I was told that the cost of feeding this enormous retinue was £35,000 (Turkish) per month. No wonder the Royal Exchequer was always in difficulty.

As to the Sultan himself, the routine of his life was governed by great simplicity and, contrary to many preconceived ideas, he was by no means a luxurious, self-indulgent monarch. Except when, on rare occasions, he en-

entertained distinguished visitors, he ate alone, and his tastes with regard to food were exceedingly simple, the national dish of pilaw being one of his favourites. His food was served to him in closed and sealed silver dishes; of wine he took but little, and the water he drank had been carefully tested before it was placed upon the Royal table. In short, every care and precaution in the most minute form was taken to safeguard the life of His Majesty.

The tragedies and horrors of his despotic rule and the haunting terror of treachery had tinged deeply his character with suspicion and fear, and the guarded isolation of his life was complete. From his fortified retreat he pitted the subtlety, finesse and brilliancy of his many-sided personality against the Powers of Europe. Enigmatical and imperious, he had spent the long years of his reign in arrogant and tyrannical oppression. But though the mills of God grind slowly, they grind exceedingly small, and this once mighty Sultan, Padishah, successor to the Emperors of Byzantium, is now ending his days in obscurity, deserted and alone.

Many glowing pages could be written about the historic rise of Turkey's mighty past; of the irresistible wave of conquest, beginning in the thirteenth century, when a small tribe of Turks migrated southward from the Caucasus under their chief, Ertoghrul, signifying "right-handed man." But only a very brief reference may be given in order to place in clearer perspective the events of to-day.

Wandering through Asia Minor this small tribe came in sight of a battle which was in progress. Hurrying to the aid of the losing side, without even knowing who the combatants were or the merits of the struggle, they turned the fortunes of the day; Aladdin, the Seljukian Turkish Sultan, to whose assistance they had come, bestowing on Ertoghrul a principality in Asia Minor as reward.

Shortly after this the Seljuk dynasty came to an end and Osman or Ottoman (the "Breaker of Limbs"—a good name for a warrior!), Ertoghrul's son, succeeded, and thus laid the foundation of the Osmanli or Ottoman Empire. During his reign he added to his territory, and the great city Brusa in Asia Minor surrendered to his son Orkhan, and became

* The ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid died at Constantinople February 25, 1908.

the capital of the Empire. The news of the capitulation reached Osman on his death-bed. He called his son Orkhan to him, and, blessing him, said: "I am dying; and I die without regret, because I leave such a successor as thou art. Be just; love goodness, and show mercy. Give equal protection to all thy subjects and extend the law of the Prophet. Such are the duties of princes upon earth, and it is thus that they bring on them the blessings of heaven."

Indeed so living is the traditional attachment to the memory of Osman that on the accession of each new Sultan the formula of the nation's prayer still runs "May he be as good as Osman."

Such were the lofty ideals that inspired the early Osmanli rulers, differing vastly from those which came gradually to be associated with their name as time went on.

Orkhan was proclaimed Sultan of the Osmanli Empire in 1328, and Cantacuzenus, Emperor of Byzantium under the title of Joannes VI., gave him his daughter Theodora to wed.

How often these early conquerors from their capital at Brussa must have gazed across the narrow belt of water that divided them from the palaces, the beauty, the riches of mighty Byzantium, the capital of the Greek Empire! What dreams must have fired their minds at the thought of its possession. . . . Well did they realize, strenuously did they develop their great military ability, their colossal energy; and indeed before long the Christian Emperors were eagerly making treaties with them and giving them their daughters in marriage.

Orkhan was succeeded by Murad I., who overran Hungary and the Balkan Peninsula, dying by the hand of the Serbian hero, Miloš, at Kossovo. On his death his son, Bayazid I., mounted the throne, his brilliant ability earning him the cognomen of Ylderim (lightning). Jealous of his brother's popularity and fearing he might deprive him of his throne, he had him strangled with a bowstring. This example started a precedent which his successors followed through centuries until Abdul Hamid put a stop to it—captivity or assassination of the Sultan's brother becoming a law of State.

During the triumphant rise of the Turkish nation two commanding personalities stand conspicuously forth,

Mahomet II. and Selim I. the Magnificent. It was during the reign of the former that Byzantium the coveted and desired fell to his arms. The Greek Emperor Constantine defended the city to the last, dying like a soldier and a king among a handful of his nobles, thus maintaining with valour to the end the great names of Palaeologus and Cantacuzenus.

Under Selim the Magnificent in the fourteenth century the nation reached the supreme height of its power. The red banner of the Ottomans floated triumphantly from the Danube to the Euphrates, and by the next century their invincible armies had reached the gates of Vienna itself, and the Empire extended from thence to the ancient capital of Persia in the East, including Egypt, Syria and the northern coast of Africa, with a population of over fifty million, a territory covering two million square miles and a fleet that dominated the Mediterranean.

But the triumphant success of their conquests led gradually to their degeneration. The nation waxed fat by the unscrupulous oppression, cruelty and taxation imposed on the conquered peoples, and corruption and indulgence engendered a decay through the once invincible and formidable race. Under the despotic rule of unscrupulous, self-indulgent and worthless sultans, the Empire sank until, in the reign of Abdul Hamid, the forces of disruption and disorder reached a climax.

* * * * *

Change succeeds change with lightning-like rapidity in the Western nations, and even in the lands of the Orient the wave of evolution and unrest has risen and is spreading far and wide, upsetting traditions and beliefs, unharring the shuttered windows of the harems, and spurring and pricking the minds of many to the more stirring issues of life.

Turkey, and Turkish life especially, is slowly but surely evolving. Deep down in the fibres of his nature the real Turk still clings to the ancient principles, the superstitions, the fanatic belief of his forefathers, the strange and rigid rules of life that he has brought with him from the desert lands of Asia. Civilization, habit, the struggle for existence, progress, have forced him to face a new scheme of things, but his real character was formed centuries ago, and his present attitude is often only conformity to a standard

which is not his own and really foreign to his essential nature.

With his sons the matter stands somewhat differently. The "Young Turk" is a collective term, and comprises much that affords food for reflection. His modern education, combined with the democratic attitude of the Turk—for though ruled by a despot, a man of the lowest origin can by virtue of his ability and ambition rise to one of the highest offices of the State—has imbued him with discontent of the present, and a strongly awakened desire to enjoy some of the freer, wider conditions of existence as possessed by other countries.

Much was done at the beginning of the New Régime which was calculated to favourably raise the hopes of those who desired a real improvement in national affairs. For instance, the mitigation of discomfort and annoyance at the frontier and custom-house, the suppression of the hosts of spies who hung about the hotels watching the stranger or volunteering their help as guides through the city, and the abatement of the delay and inquisitive censorship of one's letters were small but distinct improvements.

People can meet and speak more freely now. They are still in all probability reported to the Committee of Union and Progress, but arrest and imprisonment do not follow so frequently as in the reign of terror of Abdul Hamid.

I am, of course, speaking of peace time, for from all that one can hear, the Oriental substratum of cruelty and savagery in the Young Turk, so ill concealed under a thin veneer of culture, has been intensified by their unholy alliance with the degraded brutality of the German. So far as one can judge from reports, the last state of that man is worse than the first, and undoubtedly many of the most tyrannical features of the Old Régime have been eclipsed by the present one.

The fanaticism of a large part of the Ottoman race is an obstacle to the realization of the so-called liberal projects of the Young Turk movement, for the Mussulman objects to the privileges Mahomet promised the true believer being shared by the *raya* or *giaour*, and nothing can illustrate this better than the failure of the New Régime to suppress the constant and ever-recurring massacres of the Armenians, if, indeed, they did not expressly instigate them.

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On the other hand, no doubt there are Turks who contend that progressive ideas are in accordance with the spirit of the Koran, and certainly the following verse would seem to confirm this assumption :

"The duty of every Mussulman is to acquire wisdom,
 Wisdom is the life of the heart—
 The learned shine in the world like stars in the sky,
 Knowledge is the immortal soul of man."

THE KORAN.

Nevertheless, at the present moment, the position of the Young Turk party is problematical, not to say anomalous. Everyone remembers when the revolution occurred that they took with them the goodwill of all those who hoped that with their advent to power an era of real progress and enlightenment would dawn in Turkey. But with the lapse of time, and in view of the supreme crises which have overtaken their country since, it must now be apparent to even the most superficial observer that their present domination in Turkish politics has plunged their country into ruin.

Since the advent of the New Régime disaster has followed upon disaster. Reforms at first so lavishly promised have never materialized. Austria has appropriated Bosnia and Herzegovina ; Italy, after a successful war, took over Tripoli ; Albania and Crete are freed from the Turkish yoke ; she has been driven out from the Balkans ; Armenia probably, and Egypt certainly, are lost to her for ever.

Apart from the rôle which Turkey decided to play in this great world war, it had already become clear to those who had any true perception of what progress really means in a modern State that the Young Turk party, whether in the directing power of its chiefs, or the main ideas which they were endeavouring to realize, was lacking in some if not indeed in all the qualities necessary to gain the confidence of their countrymen at large.

Cut off, as we now are, from all sources of direct information since Turkey joined the ranks of our enemies, it is of course impossible to form an opinion as to the real position of the Young Turk party in the direction of the national policy, dominated as it is by German influence. It is also, of course, difficult to estimate how far their position has been modified by the course of recent events, and how far they

really represent the national sentiment and the better qualities of the Ottoman nation.

It must be evident to all that in the supreme crisis which is approaching those nations only can hope for an assured future whose government is in complete sympathy with the national aspirations, and who are independent of all foreign control, for by this alone can they hope to successfully surmount the dangers and difficulties which menace, not alone their future development, but their very existence.

In the matter, too, of the organization of his domestic and social life the Young Turk is also changing. Travel, education and intercourse with the well-educated women of other countries have made him realize the benefit of an intelligent companion, and many Turks are now the husband of one wife alone. Indeed, he is becoming, by force of circumstances, a monogamist.

Few of them are able to keep up and afford the large luxurious establishments of their fathers, the numerous wives, slaves, the lavish gowns and distractions necessary for the harem, where each wife had her separate establishment, servants and slaves, and her recognized rights.

The Great Mahomet, so wise in the way he built up his laws for these people, makes the man who is the husband of many wives responsible for them. He is the protector and guardian of the wives and slaves he may possess, and both are protected by law. In thus permitting polygamy it is a mistake to suppose that the Prophet was according his sanction to human weakness, for it must be borne in mind that every child born to a Turk by a slave has equal rights with, and receives from its parent the protection, love and family shelter he accords the children of his lawful wives. The slave herself, by giving birth to a child by her master, must be maintained for life, or else she is allowed her freedom and a husband is found for her. Thus the decree of the Prophet has made a man absolutely responsible for all unions contracted by him, of whatsoever nature.

Mahomet, great lawgiver that he was, had a very tender heart for women, and has framed his precepts so justly, so sympathetically, that all—be they wife, widow or slave—are ensured protection and maintenance under a system of laws to which he gave the fixity of religious sanction.

By these laws the Turkish women have had rights and privileges which for a long time have been denied to women of the Western world. For example, they retain their own names when they marry, their dowry or fortune is their own to use or dispose of as they think fit, and the husband's signature or sanction in regard to this is not necessary, while they have many of the legal rights the men enjoy.

For many centuries they have been able to obtain a divorce when unhappy or ill-used, whereas our laws on divorce or alimony have only lately done some justice to women.

As a rule the real Turk, who comprises the bulk of the nation, makes a kind husband, a good father. He has few occupations beyond his business or profession; no clubs, or sport, to wear him from his home. Theatres, operas are little known to him, to drink or gamble is against his religious precepts—and the Turk is above all else a devout Mussulman—hence his *selamlık*, where he meets his men friends to smoke the *narghileh* and to drink the cup of Turkish coffee, and his *harem* form the chief round of his existence.

Among the women of the upper classes the growing culture and education has made an extraordinary impression and has begun to sap the very foundations of harem life. Wide is the gulf that now separates the women of old Turkey—the 1320, as they are called, using the *Hegira* or Mohammedan calendar—from those of to-day. The restless, cultured girls, to whom education can be but a curse if it still keeps them bound in Oriental seclusion.

At thirteen their brief liberty of childhood is over, and they "take the *tcharchaf*," the hideous black, enshrouding domino and veil that, in their rare walks abroad, or in their closed carriages, make them look like dark mourning shadows. From now on their lives are passed in rooms the doors of which are often permitted no locks, or taking the air in secluded, high-walled gardens, every movement watched and interpreted by the slaves and eunuchs of the harem.

Restless, caged beings, they throw themselves feverishly into study as a solace—Literature, history, philosophy; Wagner, Beethoven, and the Russian composers rouse their

slumbering emotions with all their deep-stirring melody; Kant, Schopenhauer, and the mysterious, elusive witchery of Verlaine's verse feed their captivity and breed the seeds of melancholy and rebellion.

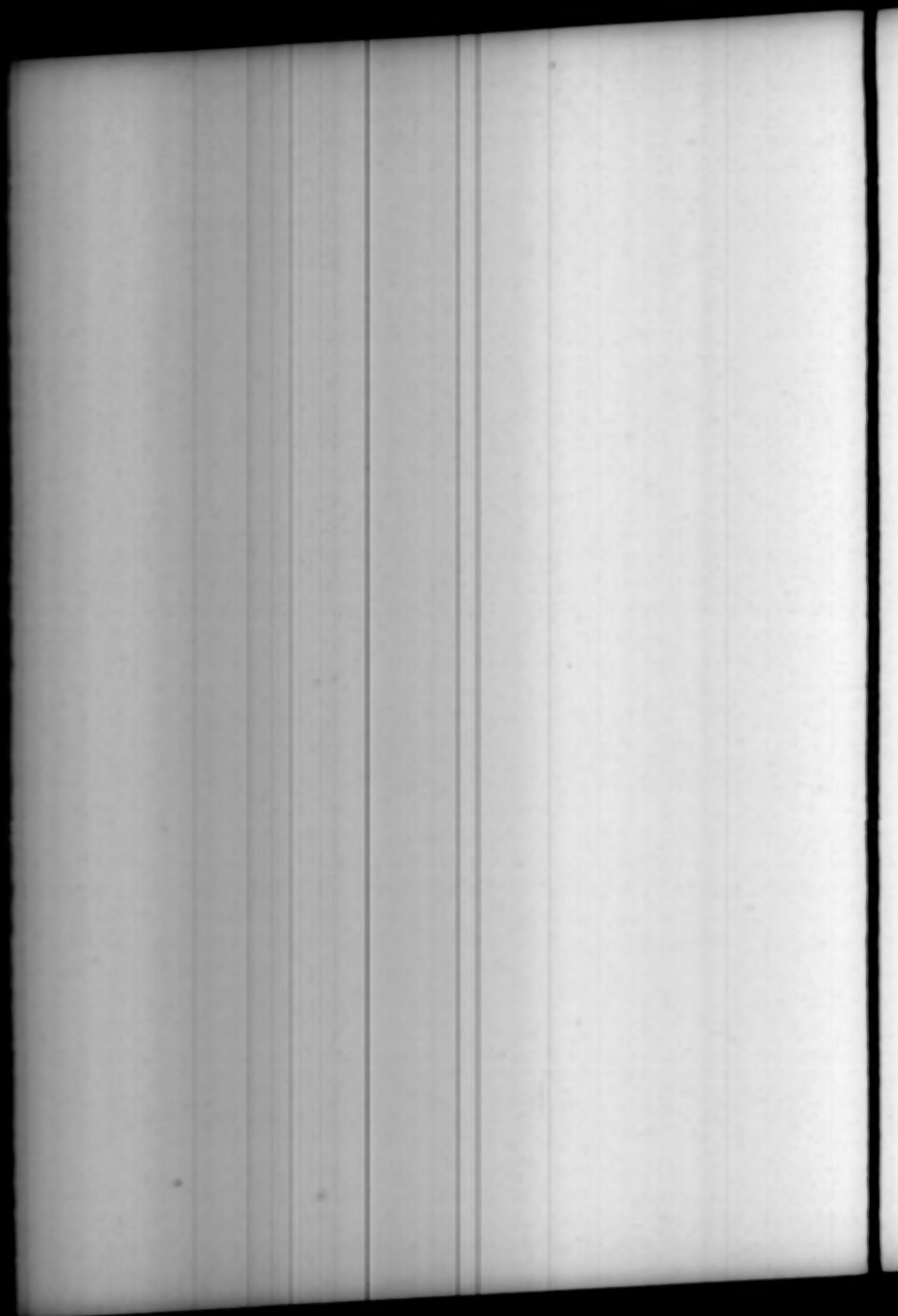
The husband chosen, but whom they never see until the marriage ceremony has made them one, is often kind and true to them, though sometimes, too, he is callous and inclined to other wives. What prospect have those of finer fibre who have found their souls, but that of suffering?

The advent of a child will colour and change to gladness their dull lives; but what is the fate of those to whom the enervating, unhealthy captivity will deny this consolation? Little, useless, barren lives, with nothing in them, how piteous they are! Passing their eager youth and the rich harvest of their later years in futile rebellion, even their impulses towards charity and good works checked or circumscribed, their days move slowly towards the end, in monotonous, aimless seclusion.

They cannot be as their mothers were . . . those gentle, placid, calm-eyed women, whose slumbering natures had never been awakened by the flame of culture or of thought. This was *their* creed:

"What thou biddest, unargued, I obey: so God ordains:
God is thy law, then mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her pride."

But Turkish harem life is passing through vital changes now, and these lines quoted no longer adequately reflect the younger woman's aim and outlook. The more emancipated views of the Young Turk are spreading to his women-kind, and those of the upper classes are longing for a wider intellectual intercourse and a fuller life. Custom and tradition still try to wall them in, but here and there it is crumbling. The leaven has begun to work, and who can foretell its ultimate result?



**THE ADRIATIC AND THE BOCCHE DI
CATTARO.**



XVII.

ANCIENT SEA CITIES—SHADOWS OF THE CRESCENT.

A MORNING of brilliant sunshine, with the sea of a dazzling sapphire colour, had succeeded the two terrible days of "Bora," or north wind, that had kept us waiting at Trieste.

None of the coast steamers had come in or been able to leave the port, for the gale had been a severe one, and we had the interesting experience of witnessing the stout rope being attached to the iron posts on the quay-side and street that runs along it, and to which the pedestrian can cling! For these Boras are sometimes so fierce that people are literally swept off their feet into the water.

For two days the gale had shrieked and howled, and our hotel, which faced the sea, showed from its windows nothing but a wild welter of yeasty smother and foam, with great greybacks beyond the harbour, that rose like a wall, and came down in a crashing splendour of spray.

There are three ways of reaching Montenegro: one by the Adriatic, the second by land through Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina to Ragusa on the Dalmatian coast.

There is a third alternative route—from Brindisi to Corfu, and across to the Albanian port of San Giovanni de Medua, but the steamers are bad this way.

We did both the Adriatic and the land route, and they were delightful: the land route makes an unusually interesting trip. Agram (or, as it is sometimes called, Zagreb), the capital of Croatia, is the diving-board from which one takes a dip into these beautiful Serbian lands. Within recent years it has become an up-to-date town, but it came in for a very unenviable notoriety on account of the political persecutions and infamous injustices inflicted on the Serbo-Croats by their Austrian masters in 1909.

So inflamed and indignant were the Croats over the tyrannical oppression and flagrant abuse of justice that though many of them were devout Roman Catholics in opposition to the Orthodox faith of their Slav brothers, they flung themselves whole-heartedly into the national movement to unite all the Slav people under one hegemony.

Though the town is modern in appearance, a wonderful contrast is struck in the great variety and beauty of the peasant costumes seen in the streets.

From Agram we travelled to Banjaluka, driving through the wild Tjesno gorge, the turbulent Vrbas river brawling below, and an occasional ruined old castle peering cautiously from the precipice far above us, till we reached Jayce, the far-famed Pearl of Bosnia—and well it deserves the name, for it is an enchanting little semi-Turkish town, with steep golden and brown-roofed houses like extinguishers in shape, clinging to the fortress-crowned hillside which, when we saw it, was a mass of pale pink almond blossom.

A beautiful waterfall is one of its glories. Quaint old Turkish mills cling to the cliffs on either side, amid a welter of shrubs, blossom and rainbow-shot spray, and away down by the roaring river bed a gay gypsy encampment nestled among the verdure.

In the little town, with its crumbling walls and fortress, are quaint winding streets where the peasants, in their astonishingly original dresses and handsome jewellery, provide endless picturesque scenes for camera and brush.

Sarajevo, the capital, called by the Turks the Damascus of the north, and the scene of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, is still an enchanting and beautiful place, though the Austrians have tried in their pretentious Teutonic style to modernise it, but the picturesque Carriage, especially the bread bazaar and the one for the sale of the lovely Bosnian jewellery, have luckily escaped. Everywhere in the old town and on the charming hill-sides around one finds little Turkish coffee-houses. Like the Japanese, they choose for them a picturesque spot and a shady tree. The Bosnian Turks' idea of happiness is almost as simple as their brothers' further East, of whom it has been said :

"A Turk's heaven is easily made—

A pair of black eyes and some lemonade."

Here in Bosnia his paradise is equally within his reach :

"Coffee ; and of cigarettes a little store,
A snooze in the sun and stories galore."

The whole of Bosnia and much of the wild rugged beauty of Herzegovina proves a tempting field for expeditions and adventure, and I and the friend who was with me were keen to explore, rather upsetting the more leisurely style of travel contemplated by W. G., who jibbed at the early risings our strenuous and adventurous plans entailed and who tried to curb our impetuous spirit of enterprise by hiding the guide book ! But it was no good — "ce que femme veut" . . . Well, man has to bow to it !

However, he managed to secure a crumb of satisfaction in the flattering interest displayed by the peasants as they looked from dark-eyed me to our fair pretty friend, and, smiling admiringly at his six foot of stature, would ask : "Harem ?" Then the bold bad thing would forget the miseries of cold, early risings, scrappy meals, missed siestas, and would smile blandly and proudly, to the great amusement of peasants, harem and even the "Pasha" himself !

From Sarajevo down to the coast we passed through the wild Herzegovinian grey and mauve coloured "Karst," or rocky mountain scenery. Past the rugged grandeur of the Nerenta defile, to the ancient town of Mostar, full of beauty and interest ; the deep cavern in the mountain side whence issues fully formed from vast subterranean channels the river Buna ; the mysterious lake a mile or two long that completely disappears at intervals, leaving a rich deposit from which the peasant can snatch a hasty crop before the water rises again—and so on to the coast.

One can do the whole of this trip by rail, but far and away the most delightful mode is by motor. The roads are good, the scenery impressive, and the pictures of peasant life that one sees on the way are very interesting and varied. Spring and early autumn are the ideal months for travelling in Eastern Europe.

Starting from Trieste by the sea route, our boat, the *Baron Gausick*, made the trip down the Adriatic to Cattaro

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

in about two days, and we steamed along the coast in perfect weather, stopping for an hour or two at the beautiful old towns of Zara, Spalato and Sebenico. The coast for the greater part of the way, is a succession of picturesque fjords, and the old towns that shelter within them are full of historical charm and beauty. Their beautiful old walls—which completely encircle the little towns—are covered with lichen, stonecrop, wild flowers and green things growing among the crumbling masonry.

The great arched gateways, closed at night and facing the sea, are of the thirteenth century, and stand out proudly with their lion rampant and Venetian coat-of-arms crowning them, reminiscent of that mighty city of the sea, Venice, who ruled these fair lands in the past. Last, but most beautiful of all, comes Ragusa, "the Pearl of the Adriatic," the ancient, fortified city with its troubled and romantic past. She lies smiling in her bower of clustering gardens, ablaze with spring flowers and the blossoming shelter of the hills around and behind her.

All these lands, and Bosnia (which lies behind them), are Southern Slav countries, and belonged in ancient days to the Serbian Empire. They were conquered by the Turk, and also passed under the sway of the great Venetian Republic. Later they again passed under Turkish rule, and in 1906, Austria, aware that Russia had been enfeebled by her recent war with Japan, unscrupulously annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus the covetous instinct of the Emperor was "criminally gratified and the seeds of murder were sown among an impulsive and ill-treated people."

Ever since this bitter day the one consuming desire of the people is to be united with their Serbian brothers and cast off the hated Austrian yoke. For with Austro-Hungary, war, outrage and persecution of the Slav has been traditional. The Hungarian troops who last year gouged out the eyes, cut off the breasts and noses and murdered some two thousand Serbian civilian men, women and children (as Mr. G. M. Trevelyan related in the *Daily Chronicle*, March 8th), are only continuing the fierce struggle and revolting savagery they have practised towards the Slav during many years.

Just beyond Ragusa, one leaves the sea, and the ship

making a wide sweep to the left, we suddenly enter the narrow inlet—the weirdly beautiful Bocche di Cattaro.

"Bocche" means mouths, and there is a chain of three of these land-locked channels, each one, if possible, more beautiful and mysterious than the last.

Few places that I know of, even in Norway and the Rockies—where one sees wonderful examples of this wild mountain and fjord type of scenery—can compare with the Bocche di Cattaro. It is a gem of beauty and difficult to surpass anywhere. On both sides rise the towering, menacing mountains, casting dark purple and emerald-green shadows on the deep waters, on which the sun in winter only casts its rays for a brief few hours at midday.

It forms a wonderful harbour, or rather a triple one, and is, in fact, impregnable. Here the Austrian fleet can ride at ease and quite concealed. In olden days, when it was under the protection of King Lewis of Hungary (1381), chains were drawn across the outer mouth—"Le Catene," as it is called.

The steamer heads straight for the clustering little town of Castelnuova, which dates from the thirteenth century. It lies piled up on the steep rocks above the harbour, in a picturesque confusion. The bastions of the old fort stand out ruggedly—great gaps in them showing gauntly—but ivy and soft greenery have clothed the ruins. The history of Castelnuova is as rugged as its old walls: Spaniards, Saracens, Turks, have fought for it. Barbarossa, the Sardinian renegade, massacred the whole garrison, and the queer, twisting old streets between the silent houses have resounded to many a battle-cry and clash of arms. We spent a night in one of these old houses, and their wide stone stairways, their dim, lofty rooms, seemed to be waiting—listening to whispers from the past. Even at the busiest hour of the day the place is quiet, and a brooding stillness seems to lie over it.

Out in the channel-way is the tiny rocky islet Rondoni, with its defensive works and fort, and two other rocky islands farther up the inner channel have each a quaint old church—one with a shining green and gold cupola, reminding one of the radiance of Venice, and the other containing a picture of the Madonna ascribed to S. Luke, and brought there in 1452. The peasants on the main-

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land—"the Boorchesi," as they are called—used to bring boat-loads of rocks to increase the size of the little island, and this old custom is still maintained once a year.

At the far end of the inner harbour is the small fortress town of Cattaro, or Kotor, as it is called in Slav, lying at the foot of the grim precipice of rock Tchernigora, on top of which lies Montenegro, thousands of feet above.

Once the Emperor of Austria came to Cattaro, and the Prince (the King of Montenegro as he is now) came down from his eagle's eyrie to meet him. The Emperor looked up at the frowning cliffs above. "My brother, the Prince, lives high," he said. "My brother, the Emperor, has taken all the sea; the Turks have taken all the land; so there is nothing left for me but the sky," was the Prince's answer.

Cattaro (with the accent on the first syllable) is the gateway to Montenegro, and is a veritable Gibraltar, honey-combed with forts and bristling with guns. Its shores are peopled by Serbs—"Boorchesi," as they are called. They are born seafarers, and Austria draws a large portion of her men for the navy from these Serbs of the coast. As boys of eleven and twelve they start going to sea, fishing or trading with their fathers, and go on till they are old men of sixty-eight and seventy.

The little town is built on the narrow ledge of sloping shore, immediately under the perpendicular mountains that overhang it. It lies within the fortified walls, which are twenty-eight feet high and were built in the sixteenth century, after an earthquake had seriously damaged the older ones. It has three big gateways of the Venetian period, which are closed at sundown.

There are no streets: only narrow alleys and pathways, paved with granite, which twist and turn between the high, dark old houses, occasionally branching out into a tiny square. Carts or carriages cannot drive through them, so everything has to be carried on mule or man's back. Some of the oldest houses of all have loopholes and funny little barred windows, making them look more like citadels than dwellings.

The cathedral and church of S. Luke date back to the twelfth century. At the former is preserved the head of

S. Trifone, which was stolen from Constantinople in 968 and brought here.

The picturesque little quay-side lies outside the Porta Marina and city walls. It is a busy, cheerful scene this bright spring morning. The noisy traffic of loading and unloading vessels: the chattering, though always leisurely peasants, moving about their business: fishermen, with their wives in quaint dress and big gold earrings, are hard at work over their tackle, nets, or mending the big yellow and brown sails, which make a big splash of colour on the harbour side.

At the back lies the little market-place. A great chattering and laughing is going on as the country people throng in. Some lithe, fine-looking Montenegrins, who have come by the ladder-like track down the mountain-side, move past with fine dignity, and a party of wild-looking Albanian horse-dealers lead their horses along to the little horse and forage market outside the Porta Fiumara, where are built the huts for belated Montenegrins, who are not allowed within the city walls after sundown, and are also obliged to give up their weapons, which are returned them on leaving the town.

To the left are gardens with blossoming trees, and under them sit the smart Austrian officers with their books of beer and coffee, eyeing with great interest our doings and dilemmas of speech. It looked sunny and lovely now in all the gay beauty of spring, but one could imagine when the scene changed and the wild days of winter hurricane and snowy blizzards appeared, how formidable and prison-like Cattaro must look under the savage, overhanging cliffs. For Cattaro still remains a town of the dark ages, with its stagnant moat and crumbling city walls, once battered and shelled by the English, who captured it in 1813.

We were unable to secure rooms at the inn, which is a very inferior one, and probably it was as well we could not, for Cattaro, picturesque and enchanting, is full of "bits" for the artist, but "bites" for other people! We managed to get bedrooms in one of the dark-looking old palazzos, which exist by letting their rooms to the officers or the very infrequent visitors. Inside, they were very cold, and the wide stone stairs and stone walls gave an

impression of chill austerity. Our bedrooms were very lofty, and furnished with the barest necessities. There were no curtains or blinds to the windows: just the usual wooden shutters, which are banged together at sundown. The floors were bare and not overclean: no bells or means for getting hot water or a bath were available: and the houses are so tall and rambling, that one can shout for "Maria" or "Maddalena" for an eternity over the stairs before a far-away voice will answer from the distant depths.

We had arranged to start early the next morning on our eight-hours' drive to Cetinje, the capital of Montenegro. It was a lovely morning, and after having our breakfast at a little table on the Marina Square, opposite the dancing water, and with the busy outdoor life all round us, we had our bundles, bags and baskets carefully packed on to the carriage for the long, steep, ascent, paying special attention to our Thermos and lunch packets and baskets, for a crowd of interested and importunate beggars were anxiously pretending to help us, and the only word that came to my mind at the moment, "Basta," though pronounced in various tones of dismissal, fury or expostulation, did not seem to have any effect in keeping them at a distance.

Very soon we were off the narrow shore, and commencing to climb the most wonderful mountain-road perhaps in the world. It is a quite marvellous piece of engineering work, and at one time was thought impossible to accomplish. Even the laying out of a foot-track up this sheer wall of granite and "karst" was not deemed possible.

Of course it took many years to carry this out, and incredible patience and labour must have been entailed in blasting away the great sides of the mountain, and many a man lost his life working in wicker baskets, slung over this great cliff.

It climbs up towards the great peak, the saddle-shaped Lovchen—the holy mountain of the Montenegrins—in a series of sixty zigzags, absolutely hairpin-like in formation. Unlike the roads in the Austrian or Swiss passes, such as the Splügen or Simplon, this one is protected as much as possible against accidents by walls about four to eight feet

high, built on the ridge of the steepest precipices, while great boulders protect it elsewhere.

There is a postal automobile diligence service between Cattaro and Cetinje, but we decided for the slower but safer mode of driving, for apart from the danger of a rash Italian chauffeur and the unknown trustworthiness of a hired car on such an incline, we preferred to be independent, and get out to sketch, photograph, or look at the magnificent panorama that opened before us as we climbed upwards.

Thousands of feet below us lay the green depths of the hemmed-in harbour, and the ships, like tiny gnats, were swinging slowly in the narrow inlet of the sea, which was shimmering in emerald and deep blue shafts of colour. Over the little town hangs a great threatening mass of rock riddled with forts, and the massive walls, sometimes twenty-six feet high, creep up the mountain side to the highest fort of all—the S. Giovanni—which dominates the Montenegrin portion of the winding, snake-like road. One's eyes roam over the mountains encircling the inlet to the wonderful blue line of the Adriatic on the horizon beyond, and a faint haze to the south shows us where the beautiful island of Corfu lies.

At the top of the pass a granite block marks the Montenegrin frontier, and we turn from the shining south-west and find ourselves face to face with a great wilderness of mountains—a veritable storm-proof roof of Europe.

As far as the eye can reach rise, tier upon tier, these mighty monsters of grey stone—formidable and menacing. It makes one think of the titanic throes in the creation of the world, when Nature, convulsed, threw forth these grim features of hers; or as if a typhoon in the midst of its wild frenzy and at the climax of its fury had suddenly been frozen into these waves and peaks of stony grandeur. Impressive it is beyond description!

Hanging above us is the great ridge of Mount Lovchen—sacred to every Montenegrin—on which lies buried their renowned poet, Prince Peter II., the last of the Vladikas, or Prince Bishops who reigned over Montenegro, whose dying wish was that his spirit might ever survey his beloved country.

Here are stationed the Montenegrin forts and frontier

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guard, for this is indeed the portcullis to Montenegro, the possession of which Austria desires with all the weight of her covetous soul—or shall we rather say nature.

We stopped for tea at the little village of Niegoutsch, the ancient capital of Montenegro, and the birthplace of King Nicholas and the Petrowitch dynasty. It is nothing but a poor, straggling village now; but the little inn, though very bare and simple, was clean, the padrone hospitable and smiling, and we warmed ourselves at the big stove—for it was cold on these heights, and a good deal of snow was still lying—and had an excellent tea, with biscuits and butter and jam.

We had still a four-hours' drive before us, so did not linger long. From here the road is not good. We passed bleak little scattered hamlets, if they could be even dignified by such a name—for they consisted of not more than a dozen (and sometimes less) bare stone cottages. There seemed nothing but these wild, stony mountains around us, and one wondered that anything could live in such a barren region. But closer investigation showed us tiny patches of cultivation among the hollows and depressions of the rocks: often they were not more than twenty feet by ten in size, and the women and children—for the men rarely work here—had gathered by handfuls at a time the scant soil and wind-blown dust, and laboriously carried it to the cup-like depressions and crevasses on the rugged rocks, where they plant the maize that is their staple fare.

They came out of their little, bare, clean dwellings to smile and wave at us as we passed, and terribly poor though they must be, the children did not run beside our carriages, whimpering for coins, as they do in so many lands. Proud, independent, courteous, there is nothing of the beggar or suppliant about this splendid, freshborn, mountain people.

It was dark when we began to descend from the heights, and, turning a corner, saw the lights of Cetinje twinkling on the little plain ahead of us. Our driver cracked his whip with gusto, the wiry little horses smartened their pace, and we rattled up the village street to the brightly-lit doorway of the Grand Hotel.

MONTENEGRO.

XVIII.

THE EAGLE'S NEST.

*O smallest among peoples, rough rock throne of Freedom,
Warriors beating back the swarm of Turkish Islam for five
hundred years.*

*Great Thermopyra! Never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.*

THESE lines by Lord Tennyson were written at a time when it was the universal belief that for centuries nothing so barbaric, so savage, as the Turk had existed in Europe. But during the last forty years a race has grown up which exceeds the Turk in barbarism, and, like a fungus, has spread its poisonous emanations everywhere; like it, also, it grows and flourishes best in the dark—in noisome darkness—where by bribery and intrigue it can seduce countries and peoples from their allegiance and standards of honour, and rob and murder anything upon which it may batten.

It has spread its evil spawn all over the world, stealthily nurturing it on bribes and lies. In India, Africa, America—in the networks of European cities—the desolate regions of Thibet—the arid deserts of the Sahara, this Teutonic fungus has reared its sickening growth.

The smaller nations—Belgium, Poland, Serbia—after heroically and wonderfully fighting it, have retreated as before a pestilence.

And now Montenegro is fighting its last gallant stand against this rapacious foe. After nearly three years of almost continuous war, blockaded for months, without food, ammunition or supplies, she is facing one of the most heroic and perhaps tragic episodes in all her history, rivaling ancient Sparta in her tenacity and endurance. She has

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always struggled for freedom and honour throughout the centuries, and the rugged grandeur of her mountainous land has not only been a fortress for her own people, but a refuge for the oppressed of neighbouring nations, and all the aspirations and hopes for Balkan freedom have been fostered in the austerity of her grim highlands.

There is an old Serb saying, "Nemud smirti bez neodgovora dana" ("There is no death without the appointed day"). and Montenegro's end is not yet. It is a race too virile, too free, ever to be overcome, and whatever fate may befall her, she, like Serbia, will surely have her resurrection, for a race that has battled so valiantly against the relentless forces of Nature and man is destined for a nobler future than that of helots.

The Montenegrin has been called the Afghan of Europe, and in truth it is so—for it is a wild little country of rugged peaks and ranges—and her sons are unequalled in their heroism and enduring valour: a race of magnificent warriors, who will fight to the death.

Montenegro means the Black Mountain, for in summer the clouds hang round the great peaks, casting big black shadows. In winter it might be actually the White Mountain, glistening under its mantle of snow. The greater part of the country is wild, rocky and arid. They have a legend that when God was creating the world He started out one morning with a great sack of rocks on His back to distribute gracefully over the face of the earth, but the sack burst just over Montenegro, which was overwhelmed with this wild welter of stone.

Its history dates back to the early Roman days, and it originally formed part of Illyria and was annexed by the Emperor Augustus. The Emperor Diocletian is reported to have been born at Dioclea, or Dukla, in Montenegro, where the ruins of a Roman town are still to be seen.

In the seventh century it formed part of the Serbian Empire, until the death of the great Emperor Dushan ("The Strangler") in 1356. At his death Montenegro became practically independent, and her first ruler, a Serbian noble, Balsha I., extended his country from Scutari to Cattaro. One of his successors, Ivan the Black, in the fourteenth century, passed the following law:

"In times of war against the Turks no Montenegrin shall be able, without the order of his chief, to leave the field of battle; he who takes to flight shall be dishonoured for ever, despised and banished from the midst of his family, who shall give him a woman's dress and a spindle; the women shall drive him out with blows of the spindle, as a coward and a traitor to his country."

And it is this tradition which has penetrated to the very depths of the national character, engendering a spirit in the people of courage, tenacity and endurance which has enabled them—a mere handful of mountain warriors—to keep at bay the redoubtable Turk and his hosts, and to maintain a struggle with hardly an interval during six centuries of warfare. For they were the only nation that defied and was never conquered by Islam, even when they swept victoriously over all that side of Europe, up to the very gates, indeed, of Vienna itself, spreading devastation with sword, fire and famine, as his Ally, the Hun, does centuries later.

It is wonderful to think of this little handful of mountain warriors, maintaining their liberty and their religion when all the other countries were under the heel of the Turk.

Not even Napoleon could conquer them. He shook his fist at them in vain fury:

"You call yourself the Black Mountain, do you?" he said; "well, I will make of you a red mountain, red with the blood of your people!"

It was a vain boast:

"Come and do it—if you can!" was their reply.

And later he preferred to have them as Allies instead of foes.

The Montenegrins are pure Serbs—the aristocracy of all the Slav peoples; the Bulgars the lowest—in fact, their name often means, in the East, a beggar. The peoples of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Roumania were for ages the conquered subjects of Turkey—the Montenegrins alone remained free. Each was an individual fighter under the chief of his clan. Gladstone's remark, "That in the past Montenegro was the beach on which were thrown up the remnants of Balkan freedom," is very true, and may prove extraordinarily more so in the future, and perhaps be the last

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rallying ground for the Balkan freedom, so menaced by Teutonic and Bulgarian rapacity and aggression.

Montenegro can indeed be considered one of the pinnacles of the roof of Europe, perched as she is on the top of her great mountain ranges. She was practically inaccessible to the general world until after the war of 1880, when, owing to the championship of her cause by Great Britain, and the efforts of Gladstone, who said: "Do not forget glorious, immortal Montenegro," she obtained an outlet on the Adriatic—the port and bay of Antivari and the beautiful little coast town of Dulcigno.

Unluckily, the Austrian frontier descended into the Bay of Antivari, so that the Austrian town of Spizza, on the north side, entirely overlooked the bay with its guns. This arbitrary frontier actually cut a parish in two, leaving inhabitants who were relations living in sight of one another and yet subjects of different countries.

Montenegro joined in the Balkan War of 1912-13, but, in common with Serbia, she was made to sacrifice much of her gains, for the sake of political expediency, to placate Austria and Germany, and in order to avoid a great European war. And a year after this, the Great War was upon us! She had fought with Serbia in the second war against Bulgaria; and when the war between Austria and Serbia broke out, though all her resources were exhausted and her people worn out, she did not hesitate for a moment, but joined in this struggle for the existence of the Slav race, and for which she was totally unprepared.

But if she had all Europe against her, she would meet them with resolution. As a matter of fact, she had all the Great Powers of Europe arrayed against her in 1912-13, but she pursued her way and her aim undisturbed, and, in the face of them all, achieved her object, that of taking her ancient capital, Scutari, after an exhausting and bloody siege. The tragedy lay in the fact that all she had gained, all she had hoped for, after the sacrifice of thousands of lives, with her resources drained, the prize, was finally snatched from her by the decision of the Powers.

The Montenegrin aim was to besiege and take the fortress of Scutari in Albania, her ancient capital, captured by the Turks many years before. It was garrisoned by the Turks under Hassan Riza Bey, and when he was assassinated under

strange circumstances during the siege, Essad Pasha, the Albanian Mohammedan chieftain, became governor of the fortress, part of the garrison being composed of Albanian Moslems, to whom the Turks had preached a holy war.

For six months the Montenegrins besieged Scutari, winning gradually the strong positions round it. The most famous of these positions was Tarabosh—a name engraven on every Montenegrin heart. It is the southernmost peak of a terrifically steep mountain of many peaks. It rises like a hog's back with great sheer sides, and in places absolutely precipitous, with only a narrow, knife-like edge running along the summit. Inch by inch the Montenegrins fought the Turks back through the desperate cold and snows of winter at an elevation of two thousand feet. Unable to make deep trenches, as it was all solid rock, and often merely pushing rocks and stones in front of them; or where they could make shallow trenches on that bleak mountain top they lay in them up to their waists in mud, water or snow, for days, sucking a piece of bacon fat for sustenance. Much of the equipment and many of the necessities belonging to a modern army were unknown to the Montenegrins.

The history of that war has never yet been told, and even the Battle of Bardhamolt, which so excited the admiration of all the foreign military attachés, is scarcely known here.

This strongly-entrenched and fortified hill was attacked in winter, with the snow deep everywhere. By some unlucky blunder the commissariat went wrong, and for three days most of the Montenegrins fought without food, and slept in the snow as they were. The Turks made a brave resistance. A curious and characteristic incident was that the Reserve, seeing the fight was going hardly and desperately, would not be restrained, and broke away and were actually the first at the wire. As gaps were cut, they sprang over their dead and dying comrades who choked the gaps, and secured and held the first trench inside it. There they rested, foodless, in the blood-stained snow, when night came; but with the dawn came the stubborn fight again, developing with fierce, hard encounters in the trenches, hand grenades, the butts of rifles, fists, stones, anything was used—and for hours in that labyrinth of rocks and of trenches the fight went on; but at last the Montenegrins conquered and held it.

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In this bitter conflict at Bardaghi there fought a clan about whom their King had written a satirical poem, accusing them of having been in a hundred fights and never losing a hundred men. Touched to the quick by this taunt, the clan determined to redeem its name, and they fought till every single one had perished.

In the midst of all the carnage came an old woman, looking for her only son. She found him, mangled and dying, caught in the barbed wire. "All right, my son," she exclaimed, "it is good, for it is all for Montenegro; all for Montenegro!"

"Had this battle been fought by one of the armies of the Great Powers," said one of the foreign military attachés, "they would have blazoned it on their banners for ever." One of them who knew all the defences of Scutari, and afterwards examined those of Adrianople, said there was no comparison between the two. The taking of Scutari by the Montenegrins was a bigger deed than the taking of Adrianople by the Bulgarians, for the defences of Scutari were much more formidable, and the Montenegrins entirely lacked the good artillery, the railways and resources of the Bulgarians.

Essad Pasha, the Turkish Albanian governor, in the old citadel of Scutari, handed over the keys of the city to the Crown Prince Danilo, and was allowed to march out with all his army, which disbanded and dispersed later. The Montenegrins occupied each position round the town as the Turks left it.

But on Tarabesh, that blood-stained, shell-battered precipice, where the unhurried dead strewed the rocks, which the Turks had defended and held bravely and well, and the Montenegrins had fought so gloriously for six long months, the Montenegrin flag flew at last.

But brave soldiers honour brave opponents, and here was clean fighting: no cowardly dodges of infernal gas or snuffing fire; and the Montenegrins stood bareheaded at the salute as the remnant of the Turks wept and kissed their guns, and marched out of Tarabesh for ever.

The Montenegrin Army did not enter the city itself till the Turks had marched out of it. Then they occupied it, with the most perfect order and discipline; not a single incident took place. No besieging army ever entered a

captured city so quietly before. Barge loads of provisions were brought in and distributed to the starving population, who welcomed them as deliverers, the streets were lit by acetylene lamps, the market was soon open and the people trooping in and out, thankful for their freedom at last. The Montenegrin Army excited the admiration of all who witnessed this.

The news of the fall of Scutari was proclaimed to the town of Cetinje, in high-up Montenegro, by a crash of guns and rockets at 2 a.m., which soon brought the people out of their beds. They came flocking from every direction to the palace; which was all lit up, and in the hall of which stood the King in his white and blue, his crimson and gold, calling for his wounded soldiers to be the first to congratulate him. Then he and the Princesses came out into the street, but were so mobbed by the gathering, cheering, singing crowd that they had to struggle back into the palace.

There a scene, never to be forgotten, took place. The old King, deeply moved, sat with his family round him, a great splash of barbaric arms on the wall behind him, while his people, laughing and crying, trooped in to kiss his hand. The brilliant colours of the national dress, the striking figure of King Nicholas with his family and people gathered round him, was a unique picture—and all this between 2 and 3 a.m.

But Europe had been defied; those dogs in the manger, Austria and Germany, had to be placated—to keep that peace which only war can give—and eventually King Nicholas had to give way, for Austria was about to march in from Cattaro—though, come what might, the great fortified Mount Lovchen was going to give her a warm reception. But Cetinje was full of wounded and women and children only, and the Army was at Scutari.

So Montenegro had to give way, and the prize she had bought with her life-blood was wrested from her. The Great Powers held Scutari together till the present war broke out. Montenegro—though impoverished, exhausted, and blockaded by Austria (thus cutting off all her supplies of food and ammunition)—threw in her lot with her Serbian kinsfolk, and on the flight of the German princelet sent by the Teutonic Powers to rule Albania, she reoccupied Scutari.

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All my preconceived ideas of Cetinje, the capital of this rugged pinnacle of Europe, were dispelled when I saw it. The long road leading up to it, through gorge, ravine and precipice of sullen, grey-toned rock—a lonely solitude that struck a chill—had led me to expect a different scene. I had pictured it a grim, citadel-looking place, and memories of some of the old fortified Italian towns, standing out bold and massive on their rocky hill-sides, had flitted through my mind when I thought of Montenegro and her stern history and Spartan people.

Cetinje, which is the smallest capital in Europe, numbering only about five thousand souls, is a tiny town, or perhaps a big, straggling village would describe it better, set on a small plain, lying like an amphitheatre among the hills. The majority of the houses are two-storied with red roofs, built in the "door in the centre, window at each side" style. There are really only two principal streets, bordered by these simple little homes, and one can walk through and over the whole town in about an hour.

There are very few shops, and what there are are like the village shops at home, small, dark and confined to one room, where groceries, boots, cheap calicoes, cottons, lamps, and post cards are sold. For life here is extremely simple and primitive.

Most of the Legations get their principal household goods direct from Trieste. Here and there one finds odd bits of embroidery, cheap and beautiful, the handsome leather and silver belts studded in coral or turquoise, that the Montenegrin wears, and bits of old silver jewellery or filigree-work, but everything strikes one as Spartan, frugal, poor, except the Montenegrin himself, who, in parties of two or three, struts magnificently up and down the centre of the road—splendidly built fellows in their striking costume.

Down the little side street are numbers of small wine-shops, but there is little excessive drinking, and their spindled constitutions enable them to imbibe with impunity. Their wine is a thin, sour stuff, and seems to have no worse effect than to disturb the equanimity of a British "little Mary." The old butler, who had spent many years of his life at a diet doctor's in Harley Street, and who took to "butling out" in his later years, once asked us in our early married

life, before our guests arrived for a little dinner: "H'as regards the champagne, sir, shall I 'ang back or let 'em 'ave it," would have had no doubts as to what course he should pursue with these Montenegrin level heads, and their fine digestions!

The palaces of the King and Crown Prince are simple and unpretentious; both stand in gardens and are really just big, comfortable houses, with the sentry boxes striped in red and white (the Montenegrin colours) on each side of the entrance. The Legations of Russia, Austria and Italy are much more assertive.

In the centre of the little town is the usual picturesque market-place, with a big stone well in the centre—always a busy spot for gossiping, water drawing and washing.

On the ground are spread all the wares, for there are no booths or stalls as in more prosperous places, and everywhere it is the women one sees working, piling faggots, loading mules, filling sacks, carrying them, and every kind of active labour that a hardy, simple nation does. The men are reckoned as fighters, and do as little work as possible. They stood in bright-coloured groups, or strolled about smoking their long, thin cigars, probably the handsomest and most physically-fit race in Europe. They are often well over six feet in height, superbly built, with lean, lithe, vigorous figures, and they look very fine in their national costumes which, following the custom of their beloved King, they always wear. Black, red and white are the predominant colours, with as much gold as their circumstances will allow to be worked in. In fact, so proud are they of the gold embroideries on their vests, and so much do they stint themselves in other ways to effect this, that the King has lately issued an order that only a certain amount of gold must be used, and forbidding any extravagance in its use. Their sashes are small arsenals of weapons, and the round black and red cap they wear is the same as that of their King. The black border round the cap is for the mourning of heroes dead for the ancient Kingdom; the red crown for the blood they shed; and the gold monogram of their King, somewhat resembling a crescent, signifies hope and faith in the future redemption of their lost land.

The monogram H. T. are the Slavonic characters for Nicholas I.; round this are woven five semicircles in gold

thread, denoting the five hundred years of Montenegro's independence.

There is only one hotel or inn, the well-known "Grand." Its proprietor is the director of the National Bank, and a man of character and of wealth for this country. He has five daughters, but no son, a cause always of bitter disappointment to a Montenegrin.

It is a very simple hotel indeed, but the cuisine is excellent, and it is the abode of all the younger members of the diplomatic Corps, and the general rendezvous for all. There are no sitting-rooms, and the big bare dining-room is rarely empty, for between meals there are always some playing bridge, or listening to a gramophone, writing letters, or discussing political affairs, in an atmosphere of smoke and gossip.

Visitors are infrequent, especially ladies, and much interest and every kindness is shown them. Telegrams from a Vienna agency were posted in the hall every day, giving us the news of the outer world, for posts only arrived four times a week, and there are no railways in the country. Cabs or taxis do not exist, but there was a collection of about a dozen prehistoric old landaulettes that could be hired, also a motor-car or two, but the steep mountain roads are bad, and we found it best to do our travelling through the country in the dusty old landaulette, which wheezed and creaked, but stuck to the straight and narrow path better than the car would have done.

The barracks are fine buildings, smart and clean, and there is a military college with instructors who have been trained in France and Russia. Although every man is a warrior, the regular Army stands at about 50,000, which could be increased to 60,000. They are armed with modern weapons, and there are about ten batteries of artillery. Heavy guns, like cavalry, are almost useless in such a mountainous country, where the roads are so few and bad, and guerrilla methods of warfare succeed best here. In the 1913 war, between 20,000 and 22,000 Montenegrins in Canada, the States, South Africa and Australia, came home at their own expense to fight for their country. In the present great war some Montenegrins in Canada, not seeing their way to reach their own country, enlisted with the Canadians, and have been fighting for us in France since January; some

of these brave men have died for us, some are prisoners in Germany, and some are wounded. It was only in the war of 1912 that the Army, which of course comprises every fighting male of the land except the old grandfathers or boys up to thirteen, for the first time dressed in a brown uniform.

The Montenegrin's proudest possessions are his firearms, and even the poorest of them can boast of one or two. Many of them are heirlooms, superbly mounted and priceless to their owner. Every man has three belts in which he carries his armoury—the one worn on ordinary days is of plain leather; on better days it is of leather and silver, called the "Rolan;" but on festal occasions he wears the resplendent "pas," a broad silk sash twenty yards long, in brilliant colours, which is swathed round his waist and holds a small arsenal of weapons.

From childhood the boy is bred on the tales of war and his forefathers' exploits, and at the age of thirteen he is considered man enough to carry a firearm of his own. There are not many schools, and the children have often to tramp a long way to them. The language is Serb; their writing is in the Greek characters, and their religion the Greek Orthodox. There are one or two old monasteries, those at Moratch and at Ostrog being the largest. The latter is a veritable fortress, a great, massive, rudely-built edifice, overlooking part of the grim peaks and boulders surrounding it. It was built in 1252, is the oldest building in Montenegro, and was again and again besieged by the Turks, who never succeeded in taking it.

The character of the people has been formed largely by their surroundings and history. A hardy, frugal, active race, brave and fearless, they can subsist on the scantiest of food. Maize bread and porridge, cheese, smoked mutton or ham and sour cabbage is their usual fare, and the mutton or ham among the poorer ones infrequently. They are a pure-blooded race, descended largely from the old Serbian nobles. Here the question is not, "What is he?" but "Who is he?" and the status of a Montenegrin family is judged not by its money, means or house, but entirely by its historic record of valour.

The patriarchal system of living together exists here as in Serbia. The father, or oldest man of the family, is looked

up to with the greatest respect, and his word and ruling is law to the remainder.

The Montenegrins have all the defects of a primitive race, and all the qualities of a noble one. Their faults are vanity and indolence, and they do not leave revenge to the Lord, as the Old Testament teaches. On the other hand, they are truthful, rigorously honest, proud, honourable and chivalrous; extraordinarily courteous and hospitable—real Nature's gentlemen—and brave as lions.

They are singularly free from petty meannesses of character. Theft is considered an unpardonable crime, and infinitely worse than killing (for a man's life counts for little in this land of fighters), and it is far more severely punished. Capital punishment is rare, for it is considered to entail such appalling and lasting disgrace on the innocent descendants that it is rarely inflicted.

They are highly moral, and though selfish and lary at home, make kind fathers and husbands. The women are not so handsome as the men, and their laborious life generally tends to make them short and stunted. Some are handsome in youth, but they age quickly. Only in Crmnica, a district near Vir Bazar, does one find handsome women. This is down near the coast, where the climate is soft and mild. In this district one does hear of tragedies arising from illicit love, for the husband, if he finds his wife has been unfaithful to him, will shoot her lover at sight, and the law condones this.

In many respects they reminded me of the Highlanders of a hundred or two hundred years ago. They display the same daring patriotism, intense clannishness, the poetic temperament allied to a Spartan simplicity, the same wild dirges for the dead improvised by the bards or minstrels, who keep alive the valiant deeds of their history in the youth of the distant villages and mountains, where books, papers, news, penetrate but slowly. Many of these wandering Homers are sightless, and the *gusla* is played as in Serbia.

No suffragist whisper, no movement for the emancipation of women, has yet reached these rocky shores. On the women lies most of the drudgery of work, and they do it all patiently, and with a supreme lack of any thought of self. Among the poorer families they do much of the farm and all the house-work and spinning. If they are sitting by

the roadside and a man passes they will rise to greet him ; if they know him they will kiss his hand. They always walk behind their men and serve them first with food, and formerly they were accustomed to walk out of a room backwards if men were there.

There is much love, and a very tender relationship between fathers and daughters, but a daughter cannot, and never does, refuse to accept the husband chosen for her by her parents, and with father as well as husband it is always " he who must be obeyed." Though she may dislike the man chosen for her, the tradition of obedience and duty is so strong that a certain content comes, and there is little married unhappiness, and divorce is almost unknown.

King Nicholas, who has taken a generous and persistent interest in the advancement of the position of women, has shown by his courtesy and deference to the Queen the example he would like followed, and the Montenegrin woman is slowly emerging from her background of unselfish, devoted and domestic servitude.

In war it is the women who are the transport of the army. It is these splendid wives and mothers, who trudge for days on foot behind the soldiers, laden with provisions and ammunition, right into the firing-line, where they are often killed or wounded.

A well-known Montenegrin, Dr. Grgic, told me that, during the fighting this winter, the women would walk a three days' tramp, bringing food to their men ; see them a brief hour and trudge back again, repeating this all the time during every kind of winter weather. And their loads often weighed 40 lbs. ! Brave, enduring and helpful as the Spartan mothers of old, one can understand that when Austria was drawing up her vaunted proposed terms for the surrender of Montenegro, she stipulated that the women should be segregated in a certain district, knowing full well that they were of such a nature that they could not be altogether disassociated from the forces fighting for freedom.

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The social circle in Cetinje is entirely composed of the diplomatic set, and is a small but very cheery one. We had many pleasant lunches and dinners given us, and a delightful little dance was got up on the " spree of the moment "—as a friend called it—at one of the Legations.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

The Court entertains rarely. The Crown Prince Danilo—who does not inherit the personality or ability of his fine old father—and his wife, a Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, live quietly, and do not take much part in social or public affairs. Prince Miroslav, the second son, is a keen soldier. He married Mademoiselle Natalie Constantinovitch (a very beautiful woman) in 1902, and has three sons. He has not made a very steady husband, and has caused her some unhappiness. She is the nearest representative of the Obrenovitch dynasty to the Serbian throne.

King Nicholas, or "Georgadar," as he is affectionately called by his warrior subjects, has reigned for over fifty-five years, and is a remarkable example of benevolent despotism. He is a real father to his people, ever ready to see, help, and advise them, and in relation to them stands much as did the Patriarch Kings of old. He is, in Europe at least, the last of the old Kings of legend and romance.

The day following our arrival at Cetinje was that fixed for our audience with His Majesty, who had motored up that morning from Rieka, his winter seat on the Lake of Scutari.

On our arrival at the palace, we were received in the inner hall by Mr. Ramdanovitch, the Master of Ceremonies, whom we had met the day before. After a few words of greeting with him, we were at once ushered into the large reception room, where the King was to receive us.

It was a big, light room, furnished with formal modern furniture, with a good deal of pink in the colour scheme, and seemed a somewhat incongruous background for the magnificent physique and picturesque appearance of this ruler of a mountain people.

He was standing in the middle of the room, drawn up to his full six foot of stature, dressed in the handsome national costume, which he always wears and which suits him admirably.

His face and personality strike you at once. He is of the true Montenegrin type: dark, the hair turning grey, but the eyebrows and moustache still unchanged: bright black eyes, intelligent and humorous. The strong lines, round mouth and chin reveal the shrewd, capable nature, and the broad brow and width between the eyes indicate the strain of poetry in his nature.

His manner is charming—easy and courteous—and we were soon talking merrily, and laughing at his anecdotes. He is an excellent raconteur and a storehouse of general and interesting information, which he imparts with much humour, and many are the bows wots and witticisms imputed to him.

He handed his cigarette case to us, desiring us to smoke, and told us he was a great smoker for his age, smoking about fifty a day. He was very interested in hearing about our recent shipwreck on the Albanian coast, and of the ghastly night and day of sleet and misery we had spent, scantily clad—for we struck at night—clinging to the grim cliffs of Ithaca, the island Ulysses had also been wrecked upon. It was not until late the next day that a tramp steamer saw our signal of distress, a shirt we set on fire, and with great difficulty rescued us from our perilous position, famished, frozen and soaked to the skin. The cruiser *Cornwall*, hearing by wireless that two Englishwomen had been wrecked and were clinging to the cliffs, steamed full speed to our rescue, but arrived just after we had been taken off.*

He was disgusted to hear that the steamer—an Italian liner—was named the *Montenegro*, and he hoped that his country (Montenegro) had treated us with more courtesy and care.

Like all mountaineers he does not like the sea, and when he crosses the Adriatic to visit his son-in-law, the King of Italy, he chooses very carefully his time and season. He had a very great admiration for Queen Victoria, and told me it was one of the most interesting events in his life when he was invited to visit England, and was received by Her Majesty. The Queen, who always loved the Highlanders, found this splendid Mountain King a sympathetic and interesting guest, and he immensely enjoyed his stay in England, and especially Windsor and London. On the day fixed for the conclusion of his visit, and return across the Channel, which he dreaded very much (and twenty years ago the wretched little "packets," as the steamers were called then, were indeed haunts of purgatory), he looked out

* It was this same cruiser *Cornwall* that played such a leading part in the naval battle off the Falkland Isles last year, and which ended so disastrously for Von Spee's squadron.

of his carriage window on the way to Dover and found a gale was blowing. He turned to the distinguished suite the Government had surrounded him with, and said distinctly and firmly, "I will not cross to-day."

Much crestfallen and disappointed, for they had been looking forward to the finish of their ceremonious duties, and their return to their clubs and homes, they endeavoured to persuade him that the sea was calm and the crossing a mere pleasure trip, but he was not to be deceived. It was then pointed out to him that all preparations had been made for his departure, but that did not in the slightest degree alter his decision, and he merely brushed their remarks aside with a wave of his hand. Finally, a masterly idea occurred to the General attached to his suite, and he told the King that Queen Victoria would be expecting the telegram he had promised to send her on his safe arrival on the other side, and as she was up in Scotland she would wait vainly, and perhaps agitatedly, for it. His chivalry and courtesy to the great Queen he so much admired overcame his repugnance and dislike of crossing, and he went on board.

But it was an awful crossing, and he preferred to sit outside his cabin, covered in a tarpaulin, to passing it in the nervous, heated atmosphere of the closed-in cabin. The deck was deserted except for another nervous passenger, a lady sitting not far off. Well, the sea went up, and the ship went down, and the lady, unable to stand it any longer, suddenly got up and made a dash for the companion way, but the rolling was too much for her and she staggered and tumbled so terribly that the chivalrous Montenegrin King got up and caught her in his arms just in time to prevent her being dashed against the bulwarks. To his astonishment and surprise, she pushed him back without a word of thanks, and moved on.

When the King told this little anecdote our British Minister very wittily remarked, "Oh, but Sir, she had not been presented, and therefore hesitated to address you!"

We talked of Italy, and I told His Majesty, while visiting Rome just before coming to Montenegro, how gracious and charming his daughter, Queen Elena, had been to me, with what interest we had discussed music and books; how Her Majesty had said she counted these two pursuits

among her greatest pleasures—a taste for the latter she had undoubtedly inherited from King Nicholas, who has written both plays and poems. I had seen also the Crown Prince, an extraordinarily handsome, intelligent little fellow, and his sisters, with their dark, glowing eyes and lovely curly hair; a complete contrast in type of lovely childhood to the fair, flaxen-haired beauty of the Royal children of Roumania.

On leaving His Majesty I begged to be allowed the honour of sending my travel-book to him for his signature. It is a book which has accompanied me on all my wanderings, and is full of sketches, photos and many interesting autographs and scenes—and the King very graciously acceded to my request.

About eleven o'clock the next morning I was in my bedroom, which overlooked the door of the Grand Hotel, when I heard voices and some little stir below. Looking out, I saw King Nicholas with his aide-de-camp, who was holding my green book, which he handed to the hotel proprietor, the King meanwhile greeting him in the kindest way, asking him about his interests, and inquiring as to the health of a daughter who was ill. As I looked at the fine dignity and simple courtesy and interest he shows to all his subjects, even to the stranger within his gates, I did not wonder at the devotion and love they have for him.

In a few minutes a knock at my door, and Giuseppe, the Italian waiter, entered, bringing me my book, a charming photograph of the King and His Majesty's visiting-card accompanying it.

King Nicholas has a cultured intellect and is a man of wide sympathies, with a large fund of common-sense in reserve. In his youth he studied in Paris, and can speak Italian, German and French—but he did not care for the gay, closely-packed Ville Lumière, and longed for the wide mountains and skies of his native land. "My land may be a wilderness of stones, and it may be poor, but I adore it," he is reported to have said.

He is a wonderful pistol shot, and, it is said, could shoot a cigarette from a man's mouth at twelve paces.

He has marked literary tastes, and is interested and well-read in many subjects. He has written many poems, and two or three tragedies, among them *The Empress of the*

Balkans and Prince Arbanit. He has distinguished himself on many a battlefield, and since he came to the throne has doubled the size of his country. In the course of his administration he has given his people a parliament, has built roads, schools, installed the telephone and telegraph, and done much for the advancement of his country.

As a diplomatist he greatly excels, and his children have made splendid marriages. The eldest, Princess Zorka, married King Peter of Serbia, but died before coming to the throne. Princess Milica became the wife of the Grand Duke Peter Nicolaievitch, a marriage which, like that of Princess Elena to the King of Italy, has been exceptionally happy.

Princess Anastasia or Stana, after a few stormy years as the wife of the Duke George of Leuchtenberg, divorced him and married the Grand Duke Nicholas, a very handsome and distinguished man, who until recently was Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Forces and is now the victorious Viceroy of the Caucasus. Another, Princess Anna, is the wife of Prince Joseph of Battenberg, one of that handsome trio of brothers, the others being Prince Henry, who married Princess Beatrice, and the ill-fated Prince Alexander of Bulgaria.

Whatever fate there is in store for this brave little country, King Nicholas has deserved well of his people and his time, for he has ruled it wisely and well for over fifty years, and has advanced it from a little-known mountain principality to an established place in the concert of Europe.

By its participation in the great European War, and by the way it has held at bay for eighteen months the forces of Teutonic barbarism, it has acquired an heroic fame in the defence of the principles of humanity, and the right of the small nations to live, that will echo through future centuries.

It is only the seasoned traveller who will care to dip into the interior of Montenegro, or continue the journey into Albania. The tripper, the tourist, or those accustomed to a comfortable round would find Cetinje their limit of adventure.

Hiring one of the prehistoric carriages, we tucked in our kit-bags and dressing-cases, and started over the big range

of mountains to Rieka on Lake Scutari. The early morning had been a wild one of wind and rain, but as we set out it began to clear, and when we reached the summit of the hills overlooking Cetinje, the sun was bursting forth in persistent gleams.

We passed the monastery where the Archbishop, the "Vladica," lives, and where the Royal family are buried. A little tower on the hill-top is where they used to impale the heads of the Turks, and it is from here that the cannon is fired on great occasions.

Further on is a little house built by King Nicholas for those who have climbed so far, and who wish to rest to enjoy the view. Hardy Montenegrin women, bending under loads of wood, faggots or market produce, passed us on their way to market in the town.

At the summit a glorious view opened out, and some of the finest scenery in Montenegro lay before us. The rock-hewn road wound in loops, dipping through the deep gorge, where many patches of spring verdure clothed its grey and rocky slopes, down to the long expanse of blue lake, shining in the glimmering sun, and backed by the rugged snow-capped mountains of Albania—that land of defiance.

Up at Cetinje, twelve miles away, it had been cold and bleak, but as we descended the gorge the air was delightfully warm and spring-like, and the women were at work on the little terraced plots and tiny vineyards scooped out of the steep hill-side.

Rieka itself is just like the charming villages one sees bordering the Italian lakes—quite small, just a group of pretty, red-tiled houses washed over in dull pink and cream colour. Facing south, with its background of sheltering hills, its trees and gardens, its loitering, gossiping inhabitants, and the long wall overhanging the lake and stretching up to the old Turkish bridge that spans the river, over which fishermen and children are leaning, talking to the boatmen below, it is a complete contrast to anything else in this rugged land.

I was told that some enterprising Italian had offered the King a large sum of money for the privilege of turning the charming little spot, with its mild winter climate, into a kind of Monte Carlo, but the King had indignantly

refused with the words, "I am King of Montenegro, not the keeper of a Casino."

The King has a pretty country-house here, which the Queen and Princesses are very fond of. It has a delightful garden round it, and is just a charming, simple villa with a glorious view up the lake. It stands among the other houses on the quay-side, an evidence of the simple, unostentatious dignity that is so characteristic a trait of the King. From the road we could see him sitting on the verandah, and we passed the Queen and her daughters walking through the little village, the Queen in the pretty national dress, the long, pale-blue coat and mantilla of black lace over her masses of wonderful hair, braided into a coronet, and now turning grey. She was a very beautiful woman when young, and even now still shows many traces of it. She has fine features and possesses great dignity of carriage and presence. Princess Xenia, who was with her, was in the ordinary coat and skirt of modern fashion.

Market was just over, and there were still many people about the square and quay-side (for there are no other streets but this single road by the lake), and they were a bright sight, many in their best clothes, for numbers seemed to have come to spend the day with relations and friends at *Ricka*, and were sitting on the balconies of the little houses, drinking coffee. The men from the mountain tops—many of which were still in snow—had thrown open their great sheepskin coats, and displayed a bright vest beneath.

We stopped at the little inn, the "*Albergo del Ponte*," which was quite clean but very primitive. It is kept by an Italian, as nearly all the inns and hotels are, for there is a complete absence of the commercial sense in the Montenegrin, and the shops, trade, etc., are in the hands of Italians, Bulgarians, a few Austrians—who are hated—and Greeks, who are despised. The Jew is practically unknown here. It is too bare a land for him to fatten upon, and so the nation is saved from the influence of his scheming, crafty traits of character, which have so often infected the peoples of other lands who have given him shelter.

The padrone and his wife did their best to make us comfortable. There were only three rooms in the little inn, very bare but clean, and the food was quite good—fresh trout, risotto and coffee—we hoped we might fare no worse

on our travels! Bidding our host good-bye, and slipping a bright coin into the podgy little hands of their three rosy children, we climbed into our ramshackle chariot for the drive to Podgoritzza.

The land round the shores of the lake near Rieka is well cultivated, vines, tobacco, and a great deal of the wild pyrethrum flower being grown. When it is dried, it is ground into powder and exported to Europe as insecticide. It forms quite one of their exports, though at the same time I often wondered there was any left to send, after the liberal use I supposed the country ought to make of it, for the "bitey-biteys," though not varied or of the worst type, were many, and of an unusually active disposition!

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In the earlier days of Montenegro's history it was proposed to make Podgoritzza the capital, but its position, so close to the turbulent Albanian border, made that decision an unwise one. It stands in the centre of the grain-growing district, and is watered by the Moratscha, one of the largest rivers in Montenegro. It is a bigger town than Cetinje, and has more than double its population. It is rather a pretty little town, standing high above the river and the old bridge, near which we saw a gypsy encampment—tents, smoke, and the usual picturesque squalor and dirt. For the first time, too, since we entered Montenegro children begged from us, but gypsies, though an interesting race, are generally beggars or thieves.

Remains of the ancient crenellated walls and towers were to be seen, and many a grim fight must have been waged in the past round these old fortifications. The round white dome and lofty minaret of a mosque stood out above the low buildings of the dull little town, among them many old latticed Turkish houses.

Podgoritzza is the great market for tobacco, hides, wool, grain and beeswax, and traders assemble here from all the districts. There is comparatively little agricultural land in Montenegro, and Brda is the only district rich in pasture. Vast unexplored mineral and forest wealth remains to be exploited, but the lack of capital, the scarcity of labour (eighty per cent. of the young men emigrate), the few roads and the impenetrable mountainous nature of the country, are a great drawback to development.

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

In the market place at Podgoritzza one sees a far more diverse assembly of types from the different districts than at Cetinje. Turks, Albanians, Bosnians, Serbs—all armed to the teeth.

An amusing little story was told me in connection with these little-known people. Two wounded Tommies in hospital in London were talking about the retreat from Serbia. One said to the other, "Oh! I know all about Albania. There's Albanos there, people wot 'ave white hair and pink eyes, and who marry the Montenegro folks, who're niggers, and their kids are called Dalmatian, cos they're spotted—black and white."

Apart from the usual market-days Podgoritzza holds two or three big gatherings during the year, when a good deal of business is done. On these occasions they usually finish up with the "Kola." Only men dance this, and they do so in a circle, the women clapping and singing. The entertainment generally winds up with a good deal of "raki"—being drunk, which makes them bellicose, and some indiscriminate shooting often ends the evening.

The inn here was kept by another Italian, and we sat down to supper that night in a long, low room, very hot and stifling, with a big oil lamp flaring over the table. Several Serbs and Montenegrins engaged in business in the town bowed politely to us before sitting down at the long table, and two rough-mannered Bulgars who omitted to do so were our companions.

We had quite a decent meal of soup, some sort of fish—"Yaguli," I think it was called—and stewed lamb, with rice, cheese and coffee. When the men began to smoke we were driven by the stifling atmosphere to sit outside, but the night was chilly and dark, so we soon retired to our white-washed, bare little room, and, like children, turned into very hard beds at eight-thirty! Luckily for my peace of mind the one candle had not disclosed much, for the next morning I was horrified to find several huge hairy brown spiders perambulating in a very lively manner over the walls, and one especially enterprising fellow had got as far as my bed, and I don't think I have ever risen from bed with greater alacrity than on that occasion!

From Podgoritzza we travelled by road to Planitzza, where we hoped to get the boat up the lake, which would take us

into Albania. This part of Montenegro is the granary of the country, and has none of the wild grandeur and beauty of the Rieka district. As we approached the lake we came into very marshy land which stretched for many miles, and which soon developed into lagoons so shallow, that when we came to the end of the road, and got into the flat-bottomed boat, with the chickens and pigs and peasants, it took the men two hours' hard work punting before we reached deep water and could board the steamer.

We looked back, as the boat furrowed her way through the water, at the great mountains and peaks that are the home of this rugged people, with their nerves of steel, their simple traditional faith of clean living, clean fighting and clean dying, and we took back with us to a complex over-civilized world a memory that would be as a breath of their own mountain air.*

* Since writing the above Montenegro has incurred the same tragic fate as Serbia. Her cause is that of the Allies, and as surely as justice and right must conquer over dishonour and treachery, so surely will this brave little nation be redeemed and its ultimate triumph assured.

ALBANIA.

XIX.

A LAND OF DEFIANCE.

THE great clouds raced across the sky like fleeing giants, casting wonderful shafts of colour, purple, emerald and turquoise, over the waters of the shallow Lake of Scutari. Colours such as I have only seen on the fjords of Norway are to be seen here. The lower slopes of the great fringe of mountains melt into lovely shades of orange, brown and tints of rose-madder as they meet the belt of sedges and the marshes of the shore, and a swift flurry of grey mist shows where a passing squall is whipping up the shallow waters, for at its deepest the long lake is only thirty feet in depth.

We stopped at Vir Bazar on the south side of the lake, and in Montenegrin territory—a picturesque little place. On our return to the steamer we saw the cook sitting outside his galley, busy cutting up and skinning live eels for our lunch. I could not bear to look at the sight, but was told that for fully half an hour after being cut up and skinned they still wriggled! Needless to say, we eschewed that dish at lunch, and contented ourselves with ham, eggs and coffee.

Right at the far end of the long narrow lake lies Scutari, or Scodra, as it should be called, and is so called out here.

The town lies in a picturesque confusion of old Turkish houses, bazaars, wharves and sheds, on the edge of the lake, the waters of which lap its very walls. To the Montenegrin, this ancient capital of his—wrested from him by the Turk long ago and only lately recaptured, after the most terrible and desperate fighting on the bloody slopes of Mount Tarabosch—is a name that is engraved on his heart, as Kossova is on that of the Serb.

Tarabosch, like a big hog's back, lies over the city. It is a great knife-like ridge, and considered impregnable,

A WOMAN IN THE BALKANS.

even among the many wild mountain fortresses that encircle Scodra. Beyond the town rise tier upon tier the desolate-looking snow-capped Albanian mountains, that shelter their untamed tribes.

Right under the Castle hill, crowned by its old Venetian battlements, lies the city, a network of narrow lanes, dark old wooden houses, weather-beaten red-tiled roofs, pierced here and there with the slender minarets of the mosques.

Albania was almost unknown to the general world until the Balkan War of 1913, when she suddenly awoke to find herself famous, and the centre of a much-disputed sphere of influence—Montenegrin, Austrian and Italian.

Few travellers had visited the wild beauty of her land, deterred perhaps by the mistaken idea that the Albanians were a Turkish race, and the fear of possible brigands. Even such an authority as Gibbon briefly puts them down as "a vagrant tribe of shepherds and robbers."

The history of their race dates back—with the exception of the Basques—farther than that of any other European people, for the Sklypetars, as the Albanians are called in their own country (meaning sons of the mountain eagle), are the descendants of the Thracian-Illyrian tribes who occupied the northern portion of Greece when that country's history was emerging from the mists of legend.

The Albanians allege that it was of them St. Paul spoke when he said, "Round about and into Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." Pyrrhus, the greatest soldier of his age, was a Sklypetar, and this name was adopted by the people and their ruler about 300 B.C.

Their earliest king is said to have been Hyllus, who lived in 1215 B.C. From this time on the coast and valley lands were swept by hordes of invaders, the Celts, Goths, Romans, Serbs, Bulgars and Turks.

The original and ancient race—fleeing to the unconquered mountains, where they preserved their primitive speech and customs—have been overrun and submerged time after time, but have never failed to rise again, and like the Montenegrins, have in their stern qualities of tenacity and stubborn endurance justified their right to the possession of the grim mountainous land occupied by them for centuries.

For five hundred years Montenegro resisted the Turk,

but the Albanian struggled for over a thousand years, and though his land was overrun and ruled time after time, he only retired deeper into his mountain fastnesses and refused to be conquered.

It was not until about the twelfth century that the country became known under the name of Albania, when the Normans, under Robert Guiscard, after defeating the Emperor Alexius Comnenus at Durazzo, marched to Elbassar, then called Albanopolis, and his troops, finding the name too difficult to pronounce, called the country, of which it was the capital, Albania.

The Serbs did not cross the Danube until the sixth century, and the Bulgars until the seventh century, A.D., whereas the Shkypetars had lived then in their mountain fastnesses for over a thousand years.

There has never been any love lost between the Albanian and the Slav. They are both fearless fighters, but the Albanian remembers how the ancient Serbian Empire swallowed up his land, and likes him not as a neighbour.

Their last conqueror was the Turk, who ruled them for four centuries by means of oppression, chicanery and cruelty; a course which prevented all development on the part of the people, all education or progress towards civilisation, and only plunged them more deeply into poverty, superstition and bloodthirstiness. The Turk left his vanquished countries to rot, frustrating all attempts at advance, and keeping them to the level of the dark ages. Their country certainly was conquered, and the Turk endeavoured by means of the bastinado and the bullet to crush them, but he never succeeded in subduing their untamable spirit, and finally he was forced to humour them. The tribesmen of the mountain districts were permitted a kind of practical independence, and the privilege of retaining their arms, their tribal laws and customs, while the remainder of the country was governed by Pashas from the Porte.

That relentless despot, Abdul Hamid, who lived in perpetual fear of assassination, picked the fiercest of these mountain warriors to form his celebrated body-guard at Constantinople, and once they had taken the oath of allegiance to him, they constituted the most trusted adherents throughout his army.

The natural abilities of the race are above the average,

and, given the advantage of education, they quickly develop. Some of the cleverest and most distinguished civil and military officials and Pashas in the Ottoman service, both in the past as well as the present, have been Albanians. Admiral Miaoulis, Ferid Pasha,* several times Grand Vizier to the Sultan Abdul Hamid, Crispi, the Italian statesman, and the former Khedive of Egypt were all of Albanian extraction.

Albania's one great national hero was George Castriot, the famous Skanderberg, who lived in the fourteenth century. He devoted his life to the great ideal of trying to unify the different warring tribes, so as to form a combined front against the invader, but died before his aim was achieved, after fighting and winning twenty-one battles against the Turk. Even Mahomet II., the Conqueror, was defeated at Croja in 1465 by this intrepid leader.

But he left no successor to carry on the twofold struggle towards national unity and liberation of the people from the dominion of the Turk, and the Albanians, without a leader, and rent again by the old system of tribal jealousy of each other, relapsed once more into sullen defiant surrender to the invader.

The Albanian of the present day is one of the most indomitable as well as picturesque personalities in Europe, and interesting as are his traits and customs, his political future is even more so. His individualism is extraordinarily developed; had this not been so, he would have been submerged long ago, under the successive waves of invasion his country has had to endure.

Though cursed by backwardness, ignorance and poverty, the Albanians are at last beginning to perceive the necessity of a national unity. The course of recent events has, however, not been favourable to this end.

With the advent to power of the Young Turk party in 1909 a unique opportunity presented itself for the application of those liberal principles of freedom and progress by which their party was supposed to be animated.

The chance was ready to their hand to propitiate the

* Ferid Pasha was Grand Vizier to the Sultan several times during the Old Regime, and was Minister of the Interior under the New Regime. He died only a few months ago, bitterly disappointed at the part his country was playing in the war.

Albanian people by inaugurating a better system of government, reforms, the fulfilment of the promise of national education, and a certain manifestation of sympathy towards an ignorant but splendidly courageous and potentially capable people.

If the Young Turk party had been sagacious enough to deal with this crucial problem wisely and justly, they might have succeeded in making of Albania a great centre of Ottoman strength, a barrier against Western aggression, and with the institution of these reforms a large measure of national cohesion would have been achieved.

For we must remember that the tribal principle and jealousy of one another which prevailed so extensively in Albania has engendered a general mistrust which can only be removed very gradually, and which has so far effectually prevented anything in the nature of national unity.

But the Young Turks were ruthless, and started the policy of a steam-roller government, thinking they could by brutal repression bring this race to the level of their Armenian subjects, massacred and tortured into submission in Asia Minor.

Again and again the tribes rose up in futile rebellion—the brave but desperate attempts of a disunited people to free themselves.

Montenegro magnanimously put an end to the long feud between the countries, buried the hatchet, and did her utmost to feed and help the thousands of refugees who crossed her border, and—with the memory of her own long history of warfare against the Turk—succoured and armed them ready for the fray in the spring.

The struggle by the tribes was carried on with such stubborn tenacity and courage that the Turks were at last forced to grant concessions. But the Turkish overlordship of this land of defiance was nearing its end, and at the conclusion of the Balkan War in 1913 the Turk was finally driven out of the wild mountains, fertile plains and fair coast he had held so long and ruled so miserably.

But Albania's future was but little nearer settlement, and the melting-pot into which her national destiny had been so long cast had only been stirred afresh.

Without the knowledge of many of the tribes, and with little regard for their wishes, the Powers handed the country

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over to the nominee of Germany and Austria—a German Potsdam officer, the Prince William of Wind—who at once had his note-paper printed with a royal crown and headed with the Court departments of his palace.

In a thoroughly parochial spirit, typically Teutonic, his wife had also mapped out and advised all manner of schemes for the improvement, mental, moral and physical, of the women, the wild mates of these Albanian tribesmen. Needless to say, these district-visitor schemes, so carefully modelled on the lines that had proved so successful with the docile sheep-driven Germans, were met with nothing but scorn and derision from a people who had kept their traditional customs for centuries, and now refused contemptuously to be spoon-fed with German "Kultur."

Escorted by the ships of the Great Powers, and in a new and specially designed uniform, the Prince landed at Durazzo to take possession of his new kingdom, and install himself in the old Konak (or palace), with the numerous rats which had reigned in it for long.

And how easily England and the other Powers fell into the trap, how completely they swallowed the wily German bait. This German Princedot, chosen to rule over wild Albania, was but the thin end of another Teuton wedge which had already annexed the long coast-line of the Adriatic. Teuton influence was now in possession of the whole Albanian coast facing the long unprotected shores of Italy, and the wide strategical country behind Albania, which could be made to dominate the neighbouring Balkan countries. This was indeed a master bid, and was meant to threaten in the near future England's great trade routes in the Mediterranean; the great highway of her ships carelessly passing from Gibraltar, Suez, Aden, India and Australia.

But his future subjects received this petty Prince, this political ferret, with shot and shell. Whereupon he called them traitors and rebels, and fired back at them. If there is to be firing the Albanians are all in it; and their so-called Mueet or King never got beyond Durazzo, except one day when he rode in state to a friendly village, surrounded by his goose-step German officers, and, as is their custom, his new subjects rushed out to greet him by firing off their rifles in the air. But this frightened him and he turned

round, put spurs to his horse and galloped back as hard as he could; and he and his Prussians went on board a warship for protection!

The coming of this Great War saw this German Prince tumbling out of his Durazzo kingdom, and going to rejoin his countrymen, and so ended an ignominious episode.

As to the future of the country, Wadham Peacock, in his book on Albania, written early in 1914, gives a very succinct forecast: "The natural and easiest line for the new kingdom to take in the future is an understanding or alliance with Greece. At the present moment Greece is the ally of Serbia, as she was of Bulgaria till Turkey was defeated, *but this state of things will probably end soon.* The Greeks and the Albanians are the only two non-Slavonic peoples south of the Danube, and they are outnumbered many times by the hordes of Slavs. If they are to exist another fifty years the Kingdom of Greece and the federal state of Albania must become allies under the protection of Europe. The two races are kindred, they have the same hatred of the Slav, and they are in equal danger of being wiped off the map by a Big Bulgaria or a Greater Serbia. Their command of the Levant gives them a position of mastery, but only by an alliance can they get the full benefit of it, and avoid being swept away by the Slavonic races. The Turk is now no longer the enemy; for the Albanian and Greek he is the Bulgar and the Serb; for the Bulgar and the Serb he is the Teuton. In a very few years the Near Eastern Question will resolve itself into the struggle of the Slav and the Teuton, and in an alliance with Greece Albania may have a great part to play in the future."

The above forecast is interesting, but in view of recent events it would be a prophet indeed who could foretell the future of the Balkan nations and their relations among themselves.

• • • • •
Miss Durham, who has written and travelled so much in Albania, had recommended her guide, Marko, to us, and we were very glad to find him waiting on the quay when we landed at Scutari, and ready to shield us from the importunities of the jostling, yelling mob of Turkish porters who scrambled to secure our baggage. Marko, who

is a well-known person out here, has been guide to almost every traveller who has explored this little-known and turbulent land, and has been through many an exciting experience. Unlike most Albanians, he is of a short, stout build, but his magnificent branching moustaches are as wonderful as the most advanced Albanian "exquisite" could desire.

We had planned to make an expedition into the interesting Mirditia country, lying in the interior of Albania, and we had a very warm letter of introduction to French Bib Dodo Pasha, the leader of the Albanian league, and who, with Essad Pasha, is one of the ablest of present-day Albanians. He is chief of the great Roman Catholic Mirdite clan, and his forefathers have been its chiefs for centuries. Greatly to our disappointment, however, we learnt that there was great unrest among the tribes, and that it would be quite unsafe for us to attempt the expedition. This was a blow to us, for we had set our hearts on seeing something of the wild life of the mountain tribes, and we had perforce to content ourselves with "safe" expeditions in the Drin valley, the lower hills of the Kiri, leading to the great mountains, and to Rodgorica.

The roads are very bad, often like the beds of dried rivers, or the roughest stone tracks, and the horses—thin, scraggy beasts—find it exhausting work pulling a cart or ranshackle carriage, even on the plains, and riding is the only way of seeing the country.

Now and then, like a grey streak on the hills, you will see bits of the old track made by the Romans two thousand years ago. They have never been repaired or kept up, but they still exist as the highways of the country, which countless generations of feet have trod.

Scodra resembles Constantinople, inasmuch as it is amongst the few remaining European cities which maintain their ancient aspect of historical interest, tinged and coloured deeply with Oriental influence. Its general appearance arouses and fascinates the traveller at once. The wild surroundings, complex, intricate life of the bazaars, the strange types of people, their customs and dress, their blood feuds, and a general feeling of restlessness, combine to form an exciting atmosphere. Its exact date is not known, but it is one of the oldest cities in Europe.

and is generally believed to have been the capital of the Illyrian kings in 1000 B.C.

The oldest part of the town is, of course, down by the lakeside, and one wanders through the narrow alleys of the crowded city, the warm eastern sunlight filtering with difficulty through the wide eaves and overhanging roofs of the Great Bazaar. The crowded, winding tracks seem endless in their turnings, twistings and labyrinthian intricacy. Thousands of closely-packed little booths crouch under the eaves, which almost meet overhead—some of them are even trellised right across—and bewildering pathways cut and intersect each other in amazing confusion. The light is dim, broken here and there by vivid shafts of sunshine, which seek out the dark recesses of the little shops with their squatting occupants, and light up the splendid figures of Malissori, Montenegrins and fierce tribesmen from the Albanian mountains, who crowd and jostle each other on the ill-paved roadway.

They are striking fellows, these sons of the hills, magnificently built, and carrying themselves with splendid dignity. Threading their way through the crowd of Turks, Greeks, Albanians of the coast and plains, stalked some Malissori: tall, lean, lithe men in long, close-fitting white trousers, spreading out over their feet like spats, and finely embroidered in black; shirt and embroidered vest were white also, and over their shoulders they wore a short, black, sleeveless coat with deep fringe; high white felt tarbush, round which was swathed a scarf, finished under the chin with ends falling behind.

All had a fierce array of weapons in their girdles, and a rifle was slung over every man's shoulder. The tallest of the lot—a six-footer—had a couple of beautifully inlaid pistols from Prizrend, and a fine, gold-handled yataghan in his red "sila" or belt, which he readily unsheathed for our inspection, and which gleamed dazzlingly in the sun. Their arms are often of great value, and are heirlooms they cherish very highly. All had clear-cut features, the aquiline nose and high cheek-bones of the true type of Shkypetar, grey-blue eyes, and fair or brown moustache. They never run to fat these sons of the land of defiance, and even when living in the towns, keep their slim, muscular vigour till well on in years.

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Unlike the Montenegrin, the Albanian is a very hard worker, and draws the utmost out of his barren soil as shepherd or farmer. In the towns he makes an excellent craftsman, artificer or armourer, and the leather bazaar is one of the most fascinating of them all. Their taste is excellent, and we bought many curious belts, bags, cases, etc., made of different coloured leathers studded with brass and silver nails in a profusion of design, adorned with leather fringes and tassels.

Their "saris," or gold and silver filigree coffee-cup holders, are well known for their delicate workmanship, and the beautiful inlaid work in pistols, sword-blades, yataghans, is celebrated all over the East. Prizrend is the centre of the gun and arm industry, and Elbasan, one of the most quarrelsome towns in Albania—and that is admitting much—produces the beautiful, soft, loosely-woven silk that one can buy very cheaply in the bazaar.

And what a never-failing interest the bazaar was!—teeming with life and incident and adventure! When tired, one would sit comfortably down on one of the little open, low shops, just a room with the wall to the street cut away, and the floor three feet from the ground, making a capital shelf or resting-place, and all sorts of wonderful things used to be laid out before one—no pressing to buy, however—while cigarettes and a cup of coffee would be offered by the smiling merchant, and many interesting conversations took place through the medium of the worthy Marko.

Emerging from the crowded bazaar and town, one passed old Albanian houses with high walls and jealously secluded gardens, many with massive gateways with a tiny aperture through which to spy an enemy or shoot an invader.

Past the big Turkish cemetery, the Konak or Palace, to the European quarter where are to be found the Consulate, the better-class houses of officials and the hotel at which we stayed. It was very much like the one at Cetinje, only larger and perhaps more recently built, and though a good many of the younger secretaries or officials of the Consulates lived and dined there, there was also an interesting and miscellaneous company of diverse race and occupation, who filled the big, bare dining room and

hall. Outside was the busy Fuschta Chacto Street, leading out of the town to the great mountains, and which in winter is often running with water, with boulder stones at the crossings on which to walk; at the side is a raised footpath.

I certainly cannot recall to memory any city where one saw so many different types of people or costumes as in this Fuschta Chacto Street or the bazaar of Scodra.

At first it was almost bewildering, but very soon we began to group them with the greatest interest. The Gheg (which means a giant), the mountaineers of the north, and the Tosks, those of the south, dressed much as the Malissori did, with here and there a tribal difference. The Latin and Slav merchants wore wide purple knickerbockers, short bolero coats of red and big red fez with bright blue tassel, but the final abomination of elastic side boots—the tabs sticking out like ears fore and aft—completely spoilt the effect.

Perhaps the most magnificent of the inhabitants of the city were the Mohammedan Aghas. They were the stately aristocracy of other days, now, alas, shorn of much of their prosperity, but still resplendent in their gorgeous dress. They are a fine-looking intelligent race and swagger along with an invincible pride, their white fustanella or kilt reaching to the knee and made of from six to seven hundred gores of fine white linen, well starched and spreading out like a ballet skirt—which swayed from side to side with an irresistible dash—coat and waistcoat of scarlet, scarlet shoes and fez and resplendent sash into which their whole armoury was tucked. The kavasses of the different consulates are also allowed to dress like these Aghas, and are supremely proud of the distinction. They wear on the front of their fez the royal arms of the consulate they represent.

The Moslem, Orthodox or Catholic women of Scodra all wear long, loose Turkish trousers, white bodices, a little red coat, and their hair cut to the neck and plastered down each side of their face in a most unbecoming manner. Out of doors they envelop themselves in a shapeless cloak of crimson, blue or scarlet cloth, and look just like bright bundles.

The women of the mountains go bare-legged, a short, thick skirt to the knee and jacket ornamented in red and

black braiding. Their hair is short, and on festal occasions they wear shoes and a dear little coin-covered head-dress. They, of course, never hide their faces. They are sturdy and strong, but their life is hard and few are beautiful after childhood. They do much of the work both in and out of the house, and when they go to market the husband stalks ahead with the other men, while the women, carrying loads on their backs, lead the laden horse as well. It is said that the origin of the unhampered walking ahead of the men was on account of the terrible blood feud, for a man wanted his hands free and unencumbered in case he were attacked. For the Albanian is a born fighter, a wonderful shot, and physical fear is unknown to him.

Fierce and lawless, he is yet grimly honourable and faithful. An Albanian servant or *Arnaut* is one of the most devoted and trustworthy followers, and the prospect of a fight or adventurous expedition only whets his natural instincts.

The dominant passion of his life is the terrible blood feud, which has decimated so many of the tribes and which dates to the fifteenth century. It seems to represent the old Hebraic idea of purification by blood, and such slender provocation as an insulting remark, a blow, the marrying of a girl betrothed to another, an insult to a woman, is held to be so many stains on a man's honour, which will plunge that family into a feud which can only be wiped out with blood and which passes down from generation to generation whilst the original cause of the feud has been quite forgotten. To retrieve his honour the avenger must take the life of the actual offender, failing that any male of his family or tribe will do; indeed, so terribly do the effects of this custom extend that in some tribes child blood—after his head has been shaved at three years old—will be taken.

Notwithstanding this ghastly vendetta they have their code of honour and rigidly adhere to it. Should their foe be in the company of a woman or have a child with him he himself is safe, though the chances are that one of his family or tribe will fall for his offence. They will also give the privilege that head and suit confers and a sure sanctuary to their hereditary foe should he seek the shelter of their hut. But they will shoot him at sight if he venture into the open. The slayer then instantly dashes for the safety

of his house and declares his honour avenged. A council of elders of the tribe is called, and as these chiefs are doing their utmost to stamp out this terrible slaughter of the males, they may fine him or burn his house down by way of punishment. In some few cases "blood money" will be paid and the terror will cease.

I think it was Byron who said, "The wild Albanian, kirtled to the knee, who never showed an enemy his back or broke his faith to a guest," and he was right.

For the Shkypetar is a fearless, honourable man, but his idea of justice is a rude and primitive one, that of the bullet, and for centuries no other law but his weapon has secured him his rights. At one time I was told there were over five hundred men of Scodra who had had to take to the mountains owing to their blood feuds in the city. The Turk tried to suppress it, but the Albanian in his mountain fastnesses is difficult of persuasion and clings to his ancient customs.

With the exception of Scodra and a few small towns, the country is of the wildest and most untamed description. The great hills mount up and up, one above the other, in a tumbled mass of peaks and pinnacles. There are no roads, and the people gather their fodder or harvest, grown in the valleys, on to wagons of the ancient Roman type, which draw them lumberingly to the foot of the mountains, where it is packed on to mule back and laboriously brought up the steep hill tracks to the villages.

Overhanging Scodra stands the old grey fort which tradition ascribes to Julius Caesar. It dominates the valley and the entrance to Albania by the lake. Massively built, the walls are of an astounding depth and thickness, and from them one has a wonderful view of the shining lake winding away to the Montenegrin frontier, the distant line of sea, and north and east the rampart of the wild Albanian mountains.

Just below it and on the lake-side lies a busy village inhabited by many Turks. Only a few years ago it was almost completely demolished by earthquake, more than four hundred people being buried beneath the ruins. One of our expeditions was past this village and over the graceful but exceedingly rotten old wooden bridge which spans the Drin to the village of Bltoja. The bridge was built in

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1768 by Achmet Pasha, an Albanian, "to leave to posterity as a lasting memorial of my beneficence." But its "lasting" power seems highly doubtful unless kept in proper repair, and our vehicle advanced with caution, trying to pick its way between the wide apertures of the rotten planks, while we investigated matters on foot as the wiser course. Beyond the bridge is a corner with a group of trees, where we were told many a blood feud had found its victim.

We bumped and jolted and rattled over the rocky road, and, coming to a steep hill near the village of Iltoja, we got out to walk just in time, for one of the wheels of the carriage came off and started rolling down the hill till it dropped over the edge of the track and careered at a mad rate down the hill till it reached the river.

Notwithstanding the awful nature of the roads these expeditions were exceedingly interesting, for we got many glimpses into the life and interests of the people, who were always willing and pleased to talk with us, Marko being our interpreter. Civilities always opened with the offer of cigarettes, which loosened their tongues considerably.

Another of our expeditions was to the north-east of Scodra to the foot of the great mountains. This track was, I think, the worst of any, and one had to pick one's way with caution. At the base of the hills a beautiful old stone bridge, consisting of eleven arches, spanned the river Kiri near the village of Mesi. It was built by the Venetians over five hundred years ago, and is as solid and rudely massive to-day as then. The river, fed by many turbulent, hill-fed streams, in winter becomes a roaring torrent that overflows into the plain and streets of Scodra. It was very dry now, and had shrunk back into its bed, which was very deep in the centre.

Even in the comparative peace and shelter of the lower hills and plains, the men are on the alert and the defensive. They may be herding a few sheep or half a dozen turkeys. They may be fishing with giant nets in the river or cutting a bundle of fodder, but they are warily on the watch, their rifles slung over their shoulders are charged and ready for use, and a small arsenal of other weapons hangs round their waists. Their manner of life is feudal and is more or less governed by unwritten law. The eldest man generally governs the

large family, often consisting of two or three generations, who live all together in the Kulehs or strongly built stone houses with tiny windows, which have every appearance of being fortified—for if they are not following the blood feud they are at war, one tribe or clan against another; and their weakness in the defence of their country against the invader—who has possessed their land but never conquered the people—lies in their want of cohesion and constant distrust of each other. As H. Charles Woods very truly says: "Not only religious but also tribal system has been fatal to any determined resistance on the part of the Albanian. Each tribe has fought and probably will fight desperately to defend its own land or its own rights, but they will wait till *their* land is attacked." •

The different tribes wage war one against another just as the old clan feuds existed in Scotland years ago. In some of the hill fastnesses also they wear a kind of tartan kilt very similar to the Scot, and the bagpipe is the national instrument of the highlander here.

They are a courageous, valiant and high-spirited people, making devoted and loyal retainers or servants if well treated. To the traveller they are friendly and pleasant, and will smile, talk and smoke one's cigarettes with ready geniality until they see the camera stalk out from under cover. Then a stampede occurs such as even the appearance of their hereditary foe could not accomplish, and much persuasion and entreaty is needed before a furtive and hurried "shot" can be secured, for they are intensely superstitious and think it will bring ill luck to them or their cattle.

The "Krige," or head of the family and clan, holds undisputed authority over all his relatives; he arranges the marriages of the girls, who are sometimes even betrothed before birth, half the purchase money being paid then, the remainder when she goes to her husband at the age of twelve. The prices vary in different districts and according to the standing of the family. A usual price is, however, eighteen napoleons, and considering the hard life she leads, the cooking, child bearing, weaving and general hard work she has to do, she is undoubtedly a bargain at that! The Moslem's great ambition is to secure a Christian girl as wife, and

• "Danger Zone of Europe."

they will pay very highly for them, but they are not easily obtained.

By the Moslem religion a man is permitted four wives, but in many parts of Albania if a man attempts to take a second wife the relatives of the first wife promptly kill him. If she bears him no son he is at liberty to divorce her; daughters, "chupra," do not count and are never included when a man speaks of the number of his family.

In some of the tribes rather a pretty custom is followed. For every year of married life the husband gives his wife a silver coin about the size of a five-shilling piece; these are strung on a chain to be worn round her neck and added to year by year. It is a prettier record of marriage than that worn by the women in some parts of Norway, who wear little hanging discs in their rings and necklaces to show the number of cattle or sheep they have brought as dower to their husbands on marriage. We saw one wedding in Scodra, but apart from the shrouded, huddled-up bride with her attitude of exaggerated reluctance that it is considered *de rigueur* to maintain, the thing that pleased one most was the catalogue of her virtues and beauty, recited by the guests to excite the interest of the bridegroom, who had never seen his bride. It ran thus:

"The bride is coming.
 She is a rosette-smelling flower! Marshallah!
 She has eyebrows like roses! Marshallah!
 She has eyes like coffee-cups! Marshallah!
 She has a mouth like a pill-box! Marshallah!"

As the description of so much beauty would surely bring her under the evil eye, to avert this "Marshallah" is shouted in a long, droning howl.

There are some curious traditions and restrictive customs which regulate their choice in marriage. Persons descended from a common male ancestor through the male line regard each other as brothers and sisters, and so all marriage within a tribe is impossible. Again, young men may swear brotherhood, as is done in Serbia and Roumania, and this forms a tie which precludes their descendants intermarrying as binding as if it were a blood relationship. People related through the same godfather are also excluded.

The women, as can be imagined from the sturdy race they spring from, have a certain independence in their homes; no man may strike her unless he be her husband, and he may only do it if she has refused to do his bidding after thrice asking her. A girl may also refuse to marry the man she was betrothed to in childhood. When this occurs she has to take vows of perpetual chastity, which are rarely broken. She can discard her skirts, wear men's clothes, cut her hair short and generally lead the emancipated life! The Catholic widows are the gayest and most decorative-looking persons in Albania, for they mourn for their lords in brilliant scarlet with wide sleeves and bibs of fine muslin.

It is considered a disgrace for the men to wear beards, and only the most magnificent and luxuriant moustaches are to be seen. At the age of three the boys go through the important rite of having their heads shaved. This is a ritual as ceremonious as baptism.

Up to this age their hair has never been cut, and the godfather is now the privileged person to perform the shaving. Queer little tufts of hair are left, the position and design varying in the different tribes and according to the religion. If a Christian one lock for each of the four points of the compass is left, forming a cross; if a Moslem three locks to form a triangle. With this initiatory rite the little fellows are supposed to take the first serious step on the path to manhood.

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Outside the thronged bazaar of the old city, in the dusty square around the mosque, the sunshine falls upon the faithful washing their hands and feet before entering the house of prayer, and touches with brilliance a little fountain round which the pigeons circle and strut. It is a fairy-like structure, with here and there a soft touch of dim gold showing through the carving. To the Turk water is the symbol of life, for does not the Koran teach "By water everything lives," and the raising of a fountain is one of the tributes of devotion to their faith.

Just within the mosque, on a seedy old divan, squats the guardian of the shoes. Fingering his greasy rosary as he lolls at ease he looks with indifference and supreme contempt upon the world and all such crazy "giaours" as may

come within his vision. Every kind of battered and worn-out slipper lies beside him—green, yellow, brown, they lie on the dusty floor in the scorching sun like so many old rags or crumpled autumn leaves.

The big door is wide open and the light gleams on the rainbow tones of some old Persian tiles adorning the walls, and a warm shaft touches into vigour the diminutive figure of a boy in the women's gallery reciting in high sing-song a verse from the Koran.

Suddenly, high over the busy throng, the noisy, dusty city, shrills out a thin, sweet call: it is the third invocation of the day—the call to prayer—the call to the faithful to lift their thoughts to Mighty Allah above—"Allah Akbar"—"God greater" than any living creature or thing—God the Merciful. High up on the white slenderness of the minaret we see the black-robed figure voicing this message to the great responsive city below.

The strange, elusive harmonies float out on the warm spring air: the melody that haunts one's ears long after the land of the Moslem has been left behind. Down in the heart of the swarming bazaars the silver tones will penetrate, filtering clearly through the noise of the teeming city, drawing the thoughts of those of the Faith to the call of prayer. I, too, listened in a spirit of deep reverence to the cry that has summoned millions to the feet of their Maker through many centuries, and my thoughts wander to the touching story of Bilal, the first of all Muezzins.

"Bilal, the Abyssinian—first of all Muezzins—was taught 'the call' by 'Our Lord Mohammed' himself. He was persecuted as the slave of the persecuted prophet, but when Mohammed had departed into the chamber of Allah, Bilal still lived on and sang only for the Kalifs.

"Then one day the people of Damascus, whither Omar, who was Kalif, had journeyed, begged him, saying:

" 'O Commander of the faithful, we pray thee that thou ask Bilal to sing the call to prayer for us even as it was taught him by our Lord Mohammed.' And Omar requested Bilal. Bilal was nearly a century old, but his voice was as deep and sweet as ever.

"They aided him to ascend the minaret.

"Then into the midst of the great silence burst once more the mighty African voice of Bilal—singing the Adzan—

even as it has been sung for more than twelve hundred years from all the minarets of Islam.

"And Omar wept and all the people with him."

God is great,
God is great ;
I bear witness there is no other God but God ;
I bear witness that Mohammed is the Prophet of God ;
Come to prayer,
Come to prayer,
Come unto salvation ;
God is great,
God is great ;
There is no other God but God.

THE END.

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